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AN EDITOR'S SERMONS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THAT REMINDS ME——

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN.

AN EDITOR'S SERMONS
ON DAYS OF THE CHURCH YEAR AND OTHER SUBJECTS

BY

SIR EDWARD RUSSELL

Editor of the "Liverpool Daily Post"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD

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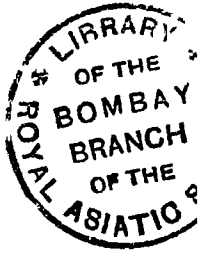

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PREFATORY

THE only word of preamble that I offer with these sermons is the admission that some of the later ones are preached to the pulpit rather than to the pew. It comes natural to the divine to preach to laymen. May a layman be excused who sometimes finds himself prone to preach to the clergy?

— E. R.

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INTRODUCTION

IN compliance with the request of my friend, the author of the sermons contained in this volume, to contribute a few words of introduction to it, I very gladly avail myself of the opportunity which he thus offers out of his abundant kindness.

My chief justification for so venturing is the hope which I entertain that a Bishop's invitation to read the volume may possibly cause it to be not only read but studied by some clergy who would otherwise have passed it by.

While it offers much good reading for all sorts and conditions of men, and much food for general thought, no small part of its special interest and value consists in its being so largely addressed to the clergy.

The clerical reader will find himself transferred from the pulpit to the pew and listening to the thoughts of his congregation turned preacher for the nonce.

This being the case, it will be no surprise to find that these sermons are not of the conventional type. They are a layman's sermons, his calls to seasonable thought and worship, sprinkled over with not unseasonable criticism.

They are the utterances, addresses, exhortations, reflections, criticisms, allocutions, the words, and what is vastly more important, the thoughts of a cultivated religious-minded layman, who is also a faithful and stout Churchman.

We so seldom get at the inner mind of such men that we have reason to be grateful when any one of them expresses himself thus seriously and frankly, and lets us see and know and feel what his thoughts really are on the subjects of most deep and serious moment, the mysteries that encompass our earthly life.

It is very possible that a clerical reader, accustomed only to what we may call official Christianity, may come across some opinions startlingly different from his own, and many things which he himself would have expressed otherwise; but there is no harm to be feared from such contact or collision of diverse views.

As Churchmen we are, in fact, far too much afraid of the frank utterance of dogmatic differences; and it is one of the strange

phenomena of the religious world that, while we all confess to seeing, as yet, through a glass darkly, different intellectual conceptions of Divine mysteries should separate men so sharply into hostile camps, whilst moral and spiritual differences create no such sharp divisions. This seems all the more strange to any thoughtful person, because the great separating gulf in the Divine order is at best as likely to be a gulf of moral and spiritual as of intellectual differences.

There is one other introductory word which may appropriately be said. These are not only a layman's, but also a newspaper editor's sermons; and when we think how unscrupulously in some instances the newspaper press feeds the public appetite with little regard for right principles; when we think of its prevailing tone, the sort of influence a great portion of it exercises, and the influence it might exercise on the material life, we are thankful to find such words and thoughts as these scattered broadcast from an editor's chair among the thinking men of a great city and all the crowded multitudes of its working population.

With regard to special portions of the volume I will merely say that if the only chapters read by our clergy are the sermons on Whit Sunday

and the one that deals with the Decay of Experimental Religion the book will have sown some good seed of a kind and quality much needed in English life at the present time.

But it is not only on the greater themes that these sermons contain many words of value for us. Whether the writer is dealing with the great festivals and solemn seasons of the Christian year, or the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart, or with such comparatively secular topics as the establishment of the Church of England or the reform of Convocation, many a reader will acknowledge that he deserves our thanks for having supplied those who read their newspaper, and very often read little or nothing besides, with thoughts and reminders so suggestive, so stimulative, so reverent, and tending so strongly through all their diversity to draw men nearer to the life of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, our Redeemer from sin and death.

J. HEREFORD.

The Church Year

CHAPTER I

Advent

CHAPTER I

ADVENT

THIS is the beginning of the Christian year. How did it come to be the beginning? No one exactly knows. When? That is not proved. Certain Roman historians and tradition-storers will have it that, like so much else, it was instituted by St. Peter. It is certain that a homily was written on it in 450. A recent English authority rationally divides the year into three groups of events: Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide; and it is curious, especially for those who regard the services as very routine formality, to observe that a perfectly intelligible and intellectual division is discernible in the chain of the calendar. The topics are historical from Advent to Whitsun-

tide. They are practical from Whitsuntide to Advent. Together, there is a complete course of Christian instruction. So that those who do not like being preached to must close their minds to what they hear with their ears even during "the prayers." There was, indeed, a time when worshippers could not understand in church, because the services were not in the people's tongue. But even then there was more or less preaching to convey the doctrine popularly, and it never was quite lost to the people, though the instruction was so meagre and mixed with superstition that the Reformation was necessary. Yet it is interesting to recognise that the Church from the first formation of its ritual had this complete exposition of the foundations of religion in view, though almost from the first it allowed its tuition of the Faithful to be hampered.

And it must be admitted with delight that the Church, however carried on, and by whomsoever, has always had happy thoughts. The happy thought of Advent is the association of the Second with the First Coming of Christ.

This having been done from the earliest times, another happy thought occurred to those who had to compile and compose the First English Prayer-Book under Edward VI. The Fourth Collect of Advent is to be found in the Sacramentary of Gelasius (about A.D. 496). It is worth while to turn to it. It begins: "O Lord, raise up (we pray Thee) Thy power and come among us, and with Thy great might succour us." Every word is eternally fit, and as fit for one age and for one Christian as another. But the happy thought which further enriched our Services, and which enriched them last Sunday and the Sunday before, was the composition by Cranmer, supposably, of the two new Collects for the First and Second Sundays of Advent. First, however, what are Collects? One of our great modern Church writers says we are not to accept the suggestion that they are condensations of the Epistle for the day. One meaning is from *collecta*, and signifies a thing specially prayed for by people assembled in one place. Another meaning is from *collectio*—a sort of assemblage of prayers

for particular objects. Enough for us that these incomparable prayers, whether attached to particular days or to particular ecclesiastical or spiritual purposes, while they never lapse from the most perfect devotional form and spirit, are an ample and stimulating body of devout religious teaching, the more impressive because in prayerful diction and application. They never repeat themselves. They embody the whole Christian life. They are infinitely full and various, and suggest endless thought and spiritual exploration—self-exploration, self-exploitation, high and deep spiritual experience. What a satire they are on the favourite current notion of the easy simplicity of religion! "Go to Church; say your prayers; never miss early communion; believe very much in your ideal of the Saviour as a helpful Divine Brother; what more is necessary? What is all this worry about 'experimental'? Where did the word reappear from?" Those who seek an answer to these questions may well remember the profound words of Mr. Gladstone on the subject. But a more copious and still more

impressive lesson is to realise experimental religion as it is enshrined in the Collects. You will not, indeed, find there the phraseology of what is known as Experimental Religion. The "New Birth" was not re-excavated from the Bible till a long period after the Reformation had elapsed. The liturgical assumption of baptismal regeneration long held in suspense the arousing power of the New Birth doctrine. But granting regeneration to have occurred, and the continuance of the individual in a state of grace, nothing can be more complete than the Collects in their development of the Christian life; not in mere devotion, but in the full and various instilment of Divine doctrines into spiritual experience.

In this respect they begin well with the Advent Season. As lately as the Lectionary revision and Rubric in 1870 Advent was made one of the four Sundays whose lessons are given precedence over those of any conflicting feast. It was wisely ordered. And the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the two first Sundays are remarkable for the grip they get

at once of the opening Christian intelligence —supposing, for the sake of argument, that the training of the Christian mind is following the progressive expansion of Christian truth in the Christian year. To cast away the works of darkness, to put upon us the armour of light, in the time of this mortal life, to remember how Christ came to visit us in great humility, to remember that He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both quick and dead, that we may rise to the life immortal: such is the teaching of the First Sunday's Collect—a sermon in a prayer, a prayer in a sermon; and fortified in the Epistle and Gospel. Morality; love the fulfilling of the law; hope; joy in believing; the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory; the ultimate drawing nigh of Redemption. This is a wonderful *collectio* indeed of inceptive Christian doctrine. Whence drawn? All from Holy Writ; Holy Writ not only newly made much of by Cranmer, but newly lighted up at the Reformation for the gaze of Englishmen by the new perceptions of it which had begun with Luther.

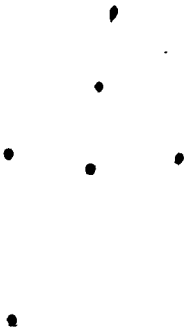
In this aspect Cranmer and his colleagues must have had great delight in fixing in the mind of the country by the Service for the Second Sunday in Advent the practical dependence of all of us as Christians on Holy Scriptures written for our learning, and the necessity of our intently studying and digesting them. What a fine word that "digest," and how far from the present current and held to be quite satisfactory religious idea of early Communion and a free day for cycling! From this reading, marking, and learning is to come the patience and comfort of the Holy Word, and so, and only so, are we to hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life. And again the prayer-sermon and the sermon-prayer are supported by the splendid Epistle, which begins in that eulogy of the Scriptures of which the Collect is an echo, and rises into a pæan continued in the Gospel of the Day—the theme, the great saving world-triumph of the Son of Man.

Well may the Church—which means in this connection the great men in each age guiding the Church's ritual—well may the Church have

appointed, as has been said, for their greater solemnity that the three principal holidays shall be attended by certain days, some going before and others coming after! Well may Advent-sermons have been early a use of several cathedrals! In the Salisbury Missal before the Reformation there were special Epistles and Gospels for the Wednesdays and Fridays in Advent, though, of course, in those days the teaching did not get to the people, and the devotion, though sincere and earnest, would be comparatively limited in intelligent view. Well may the beginning of the Christian year at Advent be said to "differ from all other accounts of time whatsoever!" It was finely said by Bishop Cosin that the reason is that the Church does not number her days or measure her seasons so much by the motion of the sun as by the course of our Saviour, beginning and counting on her year with Him who, being the true Sun of Righteousness, began now to rise upon the world, and as the Daystar on high, to enlighten them that sit in spiritual darkness. The end proposed in bringing the

First and Second Comings, "these two appearances together, is to beget," says Bishop Horne, "in our minds proper disposition to celebrate the one and expect the other, going first to Bethlehem to see this great thing which is come to pass which the Lord hath made known to us, and thence with faith unfeigned and hope immovable ascend in heart and mind to meet the same Son of God in the air, coming in glorious majesty to judge the quick and the dead." The theme has had many celebrants. What curiously different things one man writes! Sir Henry Wotton, the diplomatist cynic, wrote that an ambassador was a man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country. Sir Henry Wotton, the Christian, wrote of Advent:—

"Well, then, my soul, joy in the midst of pain;
Thy Christ that conquered hell shall from above
With greater triumph yet return again,
And conquer His own justice with His love—
Commanding earth and seas to render those
Unto His bliss for whom He paid His woes."



CHAPTER II

Christmas

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CHRISTMAS

"Christmas comes but once a year."

How many of us know where that comes from? Or at least where it is first known to have appeared in literature? A convenient authority says that it may be attributed to Thomas Tusser, and was written some time between 1515 and 1580 in the following couplet:—

"At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

Tusser was one of Fuller's Worthies. Stillingfleet and Warton classed him with Hesiod. He certainly added to common speech more than three hundred years ago an indispensable couplet which has scarcely ever been recited

without response. The cheer which comes with Christmas has been led up to for some years past by perfectly clement weather. "At Christmas I no more desire a rose," says Biron in "Love's Labours Lost," "Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth; But like of each thing that in season grows." This preference for seasonableness in weather and in products is very general; but a rose, even if not desired at Christmas, is welcome then or at any time, and the other year, within a week or two of Christmas Day, many roses were grown in the open air in many parts of England; so that the path to Christmas was beautifully strewn. No eloquence is necessary to prove how fitting is beauty to the Christmas season, which of all others is linked in the most natural and homely manner with all human joys. The golden diction of St. Chrysostom himself, who taught the doctrine of Christmas at Antioch, could not heighten or deepen the emotions which are inspired by any simplest relation of the old tale of the Star and the Wise Men and the Manger.

How the simple incidents grew and were magnified in their significance, never needing to grow or be bedizened in their accessories! Christian art was mystical and gorgeous in such adornments alike in the Eastern and the Western Church; but everywhere fathers and mothers and children loved the story at its simplest. A child was born, and there was no room in the inn, and the manger was His cradle, and a star in the heavens led wise men from afar, and they brought costly gifts and offered them to Him, for He was the Saviour of the World. And shepherds, abiding in the fields, heard in the night the voice of an angel: "Be not afraid. I bring you tidings of great joy. Christ the Lord is born in Bethlehem." And suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host was with the angel singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased." It is all told in this narration, and these things have been the happy burden ever since of eloquence, of poetry, of music, of carols, and of church bells—of prayer and of thanksgiving—of divinity and

of devotion—the height of spiritual inspiration, the inner holiness and beauty of every Christian homestead. It has been said that in arranging her services the Christian Church had happy thoughts. One of her earliest happy thoughts was to celebrate Christmas and Epiphany on one day, the 6th of January, because it was supposed that on that day our Saviour was baptised. Learning supposed to be more accurate in the Western Church, put an end to this practice, but the thought of it—the association of the nativity and the baptismal consecration—may yet be cherished, even if fancifully, and the Armenian Church still adheres to the usage. Among the traditions of dishonest origin, but having beauty, was one that on the night before the nativity Telesiphorus, under Antoninus Pius, ordered Divine service to be celebrated, and angelical hymns to be sung. How inspired we know not, but it is a pretty Christmas legend, and would make a great poem. It is pleasant to recur to the earliest observances, and to find how at the beginning Christmas rites were full of that thoughtful

veneration which no merriment, however innocent, should ever be allowed to banish. Clement of Alexandria tells how the Christians of his time spent the night before Christmas Day in readings, and it is recorded—and thus the family idea was recognised—that St. Chrysostom bade the people purge their homes before contemplating the newly-born Saviour: an admonition of great and searching pith and moment. There were many masses, and always sermons. Public games and shows were prohibited. Christmas Day was to be as sacred and as absolutely a day of rest as the Lord's Day. From this the ages have passed, not indeed away from the idea of rest, but somewhat from sacredness in the direction of festivity. Sometimes Sunday and Christmas Day are brought together, and one result is that many households keep it on Monday. Let us hope that if any such conjunction gives added sanctity to a week-day which is not the 25th of December, the 25th may never lose its element of reverence, or the real Christianity of its joy, whether it falls on week-day or on Sunday.

The domestic side of Christmas may be seen to have a special significance in the light of a difficulty of conduct which is spoken of in a most original and feeling manner in one of the letters of Dr. Dale given in his "Life." The letter is written to a young lady at Newnham, and sets out with the observation that the years in which we are constantly advancing into new provinces of intellectual activity are years of romance and memorable for ever. This is as true in religion as in any other subject of intellectual activity. But Dr. Dale goes on to say that like all specially intense forms of life this has its perils. The chief form of danger seems to lie, he says, in the influence which intellectual excitement sometimes exerts in withdrawing us from those personal relationships in which the ethical life reaches its complete development. Whether or not ethical life does thus reach its most complete development, unquestionably, keen intellectual pursuits have often the effect of withdrawing men from a strong interest in personal relationships. "The life of the home, of society, of the Church,"

says Dr. Dale, "loses its hold on us when we are under the spell of the enchanted lands of the intellect. Books become dearer to us than friends and kindred, and the commonplace interests of every-day life, since they do not bring with them any intellectual stimulus, cease to be attractive." Few of us, it may be supposed, are in much danger on this side. But all dangers are to be taken account of and to be avoided. Dr. Dale winds up his letter thus:—"You are having, I trust, a very merry Christmas. This is a most wholesome defence against the intellectual absorption of which I have ventured to speak." The lady to whom he was writing was probably an exceptional person. But every side of truth and character is worth looking at, and Christmas itself with its family associations may have for some a new regard if we consider that intellectual occupations may become too engrossing, and that occasionally in the later years of life, while there has been nothing seriously to regret in the way of omission or mistake, there may come a feeling that with less intellectual

isolation the associations of family and friendship might have yielded a greater total of accrued happiness and even usefulness.

For others not specially intellectual or intense the reminder and admonition of Christmas are in a different region, though of similar tenor. There are many men and some women whose pleasant associations are too much away from home. The men are "social." The women are gadabouts. Even the athletics which guard the hearth extrude the domesticities. The children see little of their parents—even, in the worst cases, of their mothers. Frou-frou is either visiting, or golfing, or cycling. As to their father, the poor things scarcely know what spirit he is of, and grow up without any store of influence left by him to germinate in their "hearts and thoughts." For all so situated Christmas—a thorough home Christmas—and such are usual in the least likely homes—may be, if there is a little reflection on the part of the elders, a salutary revival of what a home should be. It gives the young people a chance. Too few people think so, but

much of the good in the word is initiated by good resolutions and secured by sudden "conversions" *ad hoc.* Around the Christmas hearth there may be warmed in comparatively indifferent hearts a healthier idea of family life. The boy at school may get next year more frequent and better letters. The little ones may be oftener on the father's knee, and bring their spontaneous humour and opening interests to a more genial listener. The girls may find their mother a livelier companion. The wife may find her husband a more thoughtful observer and adviser about the girls and boys. Even beyond the home, as regards relations, the ties of blood may become softer and more welcome. And alike at home and in public services the observances and the fortifyings of religion may hold that place in the building up of home which a rightly merry Christmas suggests for them.

CHAPTER III

Ash Wednesday

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ASH WEDNESDAY

THIS is anciently "the day of sprinkling ashes"—last relic of an ancient discipline which assumed to cover publicly the malfeasances of all "inconsistent" Christians, though that word, unlike the quality, was not known in primitive times. Curiously enough, it is established on pretty good authority that the Reformers were intent on restoring this public contrition and condemnation, which had been disused throughout the Middle Ages. Perhaps their aim was to substitute it for the more private direction, penance and absolution, which they reprobated in the Roman Church.

But they found that if people were willing to be drawn from Roman practices, they were not willing to be drawn to still older rites and usages. And, indeed, it could hardly be expected in any time with "modernity" in it that a practice so essentially primitive could be resumed. In the small and simple early Christian communities, a watchful and open *surveillance* was maintained over the life and conversation of their members. On Ash Wednesday sinners appeared in church barefooted, in sackcloth, their eyes downcast, and with ashes on their heads. They were dealt with "faithfully"; they were prayed over; they were excommunicated; they were told that Adam was ejected from Paradise, so they were expelled from the Church. After a considerable interval these penitents were gradually readmitted, first as hearers, then as kneelers; then as co-standers; but not finally as communicants till a much longer period had elapsed. This is a picture of primitive practice which cannot but fix the attention of thoughtful people. It shows how earnest, how

intense, how fearless were the early Christians —in a word, how worthy of their vocation. And if the observance soon became too formal —if it be now confessed that neither in the way of public rebuke nor in the way of habitual auricular confession can Christians of the present day be held under the restraints and the influences of religion, all the more is it fit and obligatory to recognise the lenten element in life—that is to say, the periodical arraigning and chastising of the lower portions of our nature.

Such is now the practical meaning of Lent among persons of any devoutness. The origin of the season, like the origin of most Christian seasons, is immersed in mystery and contradiction. But it is clear that like others it was associated with the life of the Founder of the Christian faith, and that it combined more or less vaguely, and more or less clearly, the three ideas: the Saviour's fasting submission —so sympathetic and instructive to us—to the temptation in the wilderness; the sorrow of the disciples for the loss of their Lord; and

the spiritual process of recognising the evil and the sin that lurk in us, and of applying to them with great seriousness and self-mortification the remedies which Christianity supplies. Some of the Fathers claim apostolic authority for Lent under some of its aspects, but it is far more important for us of the present day to acknowledge cordially the value of its meaning, and to do so with as little as may be of that formal and mechanical observance on which some depend, but which others think tends more to petrify than to invigorate Christian experience. We must recognise that in every form of religion now in vogue feeling is duller, thought is more dormant, consciousness is less minute (some would say less morbid) than in days not yet out of memory. In these days the devout of Catholic leanings abstain from certain meats—too often, at the same time, half playfully resenting the deprivation in a manner which to any Protestant religionist of fifty years ago would have denoted an entire want of sympathy with fasting observance. They cease going to

theatres; they wear sombre colours; they discourage marriages till after Easter; they put cards away. It is for individual consciences to weigh the value—or rather to appraise the significance of such outward acts. We are not saying that all earnest religionists of years ago used to fast and seclude themselves in Lent. But we are saying that if they had done so, they would have done it with a clear and deep feeling of its meaning. The profound feeling would have been the first consideration; the outward observance would have been secondary.

Taking the spiritual view—at all events of the significance—of Lent, which all should desire to see entertained, it must be frankly admitted that the cursing part of the Commination Service would be left out if the Prayer-Book were wisely revised. But, on the other hand, the prayers, the Fifty-first Psalm, and—*minus* a phrase or two—the powerful adjuration of the "minister," must be acknowledged as eminently fit to inaugurate an annual period of self-examination and self-

abasement, "bewailing and lamenting," "seeking to bring forth worthy fruits of penance." "For, lo, the Lord is come out of His place to visit the wickedness of such as dwell upon the earth." "Then shall appear the wrath which obstinate sinners in the stubbornness of their heart have heaped upon themselves." "He is ready to receive us if we will take His easy yoke and light burden upon us, to follow Him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of His Holy Spirit, seeking always His glory and serving Him duly in our vocation with thanksgiving." No formality here. Is there or is there not need of such admonitions? If there is, ought not all to come willingly and thoughtfully under admonition?

There are some who object to do this in the form of rigid lenten observance for the whole six weeks, because such guarding against sinfulness ought to be spread over the life. To do it periodically and at special times is, in their judgment, morbid—liable to produce too much attention to the sin side of life at

one time and too little at another. There is something to be said for this view. It may safely be agreed that if a man never eats and drinks too much there is no occasion for him to eat and drink less in Lent; and that if he does eat and drink more than he ought he should give up the practice not only in Lent, but all the year round. There can be no doubt, moreover, that to dwell on sin in one's thoughts either too little or too much is a mistake, and has a bad effect. Sin and sinfulness should just be thought of enough to keep us fairly right in the even tenor of a life in which there is neither self-righteousness nor permitted declension. If Lent is too exclusively used as the one recognition of sin and penitence the result will undoubtedly be unhealthy. There is an analogy which may be somewhat freely used to illustrate this. Harrogate, Homburg, Carlsbad, Marienbad, and other places are very good for persons with certain ailments, but if those ailments are in any degree the result of too luxurious living, then to go to Harrogate once a year and to

live recklessly all the other nine or ten months, though a very common practice in Liverpool, London, Paris, and elsewhere, is distinctly wrong. A similar infirmity is possible at the season of Lent in matters spiritual, though it may not be so frequent. There is, however, no reason for avoiding that reasonable penitential contemplation which the moderate and truly spiritual services of the Church of England suggest. The ritual, including the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, is thoroughly salutary; and alike in the English and the Roman Catholic Church, the season is, as it well may be, a special one for preaching. In this there has in all Christian ages been great and powerful variety. No frailty, either intellectual, moral, or spiritual, can be held exempt from the preacher's lenten rebuke; and it should be an earnest aim of every preacher so to select his topics and so to apply them as to stimulate his hearers to such progress in the Divine life as may make memorable the Lent in which it was resolved upon.

CHAPTER IV

Lent

CHAPTER IV

LENT

LENTEN sermons as a rule are plain and practical. They inculcate self-knowledge. With this in view they advise self-examination. They deal, if not with specific sins, with the general conditions of sinfulness. The business of the Lenten pulpit is supposed to be to kindle a sense of the liability to short-comings, and to bring each person under the influence of whatever religion can bring to bear upon the frailties of character. But it must be admitted that both in morals and beyond the domain of morals, in the ordinary sense of the word, topics out of the usual run may be conceived. And these would repay the thoughts of our clergy. Granted that ordinary considerations of morality and simple require-

ments of religion at a certain level of devotion are the fittest, first and main subjects of Lenten preaching: may we not entertain the idea that moot points of conduct and moot points even of religion are fair subjects to be taken up at fit opportunities. Sunday morning is a good time for discourses a little out of the common. The Church makes a great mistake if it does not endeavour to interest and enlist educated people. For the common people to hear a preacher gladly is an excellent ideal; but in many ways the common people are got at by uncommon people, and if higher minds are not sufficiently attracted and engaged one shudders to think how great a proportion of Church influence will be sacrificed. No one expects to find a Liddon, a Scott Holland, a Gore, or an Illingworth in every pulpit. No one wishes to overrate the degree in which average preachers can light up those sacred themes which of necessity are in their essence unchangeable. No one desires to underrate the value of that simple Christian teaching of which every competent clergyman

may be presumed capable. Still, it is a serious mistake not to keep preaching up to the mark in its acceptableness to intelligent people. Although the doctrines are old, one has only to look round in each age to perceive that they are newly seen or newly out of sight. Recent discussions have indicated what aspects of religion have become obscured, what have become vivid. Now, it does not follow that any of these changes are wrong, but it does follow that whatever is uppermost and conspicuous for the time should be something more than mere fashion, and should be vindicated from the pulpit, or condemned, according to the conscientious convictions of the clergy, who as preachers ought to be the keepers of their people's consciences, or at least the enlighteners of them. If this duty has been neglected the clergy who have neglected it may well take a rather Lenten, even a penitential, view of their performances.

Probably we shall have few with us if we go on to say that a very good subject for Lenten homiletics would be the desirableness of

making sermons less hardly and drily insistent on the miraculous, and less addicted to what some would call the husks and some the crust or shell of dogma. Miracle there is, and dogma there must be, but it is apparent enough that miracle which used to be convincing is now a difficulty of belief. There is a manner in which miracles can be dealt with without alienating any intelligent person, while at the same time not giving up the received belief. The greatest miracles are associated with the greatest dogmas ; but in this day it is the spiritual meaning of the dogma rather than the material operation of the miracle which awakens and engrosses the consciousness. If the pulpit were to confess its own faults in Lent it might have to say that it had often done harm or risked a failure in doing good by putting too bluntly and too materialistically the miraculous side of religious tradition. We are not asserting this criticism definitely. We rather regard the whole subject as one for indefinite treatment. But we are looking in the face the fact—and asserting that preachers

ought to look in the face the fact—that the miraculous has ceased to impress, and ought not to be ridden hard. If a preacher is intent on it he may be bound by his conscience to be correspondingly insistent; but it would be a happier condition if he were to feel free to turn his attention and the attention of his people in preference to those spiritual considerations which in one way or another must underlie the function which miracle has in the religious domain. Over-insistence on dogma is more difficult to challenge, but quite as distinctly needs challenging. One can hardly declare that dogma shall not be taught, but there is dogma and dogma, and there is a too dogmatic way of promulgating dogmas. The spirit of the time is in favour of a few simple dogmas being enforced. They are beautiful dogmas, such as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of the Saviour. A preacher should consider in and out of Lent—and he should specially consider in Lent, when all of us should cross-examine ourselves—whether the preference of the age deserves to be considered, whether it

is an avenue to good teaching, or whether it tends to exclude good teaching. If we have not enough of dogma, and if that is a serious fact with important consequences, let the preachers tell us so and let the laity have it out with them. But if the age is right in thinking that a great proportion of dogma is unfruitful of spiritual result, and that it is best to deal chiefly with dogma of the supreme kind and to exploit in various forms its influences on the religious life, then let the pulpit conform to this current ideal.

Of not less Lenten importance is the treatment of moral questions. We wish to egg preachers on both to treat subjects of value that are generally neglected and to treat them in a way as remote as possible from the usual gingerly pulpit manner. For instance, how necessary is a more apt and home-thrusting treatment of the question of temperance. We are not thinking of teetotalism. We are reflecting that in most churches the insidious dangers of drink are never spoken of from year's end to year's end, and that when drink

is named it is treated merely as associated with the poor and with squalor. Nothing can be farther from the truth, as every congregation knows. To what better use can Lent be put than that of urging such subjects as these—so full of practical, vital importance for many individuals and many families—in such a manner as will hit the weaknesses and guard against the dangers in daily habits of those in our congregations who are most concerned in this frailty? Take, again, the topic of commercial morality. As a rule pronouncements on this are of but little worth. They are usually so expressed as to repel every man of business by their unpractical quality. And it is unlikely that preachers can acquire sufficient practical acquaintance with business to escape this fault. But it would repay them to converse with reputable, conscientious, and intelligent merchants and brokers and salesmen and clerks, so as to ascertain what are the recognised principles of business morals—so as to make some attempt to decide whether these principles are sufficiently adhered to, and

whether they are intrinsically sound. If the pulpit makes mistakes it is better that it should agitate the minds of the laity if only by bringing home the consideration that there are such ethical questions to be considered, and that laymen ought to be sure, first that they are faithful to the rule of their business, and, secondly, that that rule is satisfactory in point of honour and in rendering conscious moral conduct possible in those engaged in the trade. One illustration more: how little help is given to the laity on the subject of amusements! The old divines used to condemn dancing, the theatre, and cards. It would be quite useless for present-day divines to adopt these hard and fast lines. But there are surely faults incident to dancing, faults common to theatrical performances, evil habits to which card players are prone, which might easily and beneficially be dealt with in the pulpit, either by shrewd warnings in concrete detail or by instructive statements of those general rules of propriety and decorum and virtue which no amusement ought to transgress. Hearers of sermons

would so be fortified both to govern worthily their own conduct on the lighter side of life and to use that social and public influence which creates effectual and governing opinion.

II

On the Sunday after Mr. Gladstone's death his character was sympathetically preached about in nearly all the churches, and the preacher in St. Paul's Cathedral was the Archbishop of Canterbury. In speaking of Mr. Gladstone's firm adhesion to dogma, the Primate said, "Without which there can be no religion." This was surely a dangerous thing to say. The unenlightened religiose who heard it would interpret it as requiring a more elaborate and complete adhesion to dogma than the Archbishop thought of. But besides this — which would create inconvenience in religious teaching—one has to consider that there are many who keep up

a religious life on a minimum of dogmatic belief. Such persons enjoy the presentations of dogma in the Bible and in ritual, without pinning their faith to them. Looking at religiousness as an ethical matter, it cannot be said that religion would cease in such men if all dogma had to be given up. If this is not so, religion itself is unessential, for while the main use of dogma must be to foster reverence, and worship, and conscience, these great things would be relegated to a lower place than is rightfully their own if their existence were made to depend upon the other things, or statements, however great, whose chief purpose is to support them. Let it be recognised, too, that a larger number of persons in each generation fall short of dogma in every direction, while quite capable of deriving from dogma, or from the contemplative and devotional occupation of their minds with dogma, both spiritual delight and spiritual improvement. Jowett, Master of Balliol, said with equal *naïveté* and devoutness that he believed all he should. Surely that is not a

type of religionist which should be condemned or driven out of Christian communion. Contrast the man who believes as much as he can with the man who believes as little as he can. It is to pass from an atmosphere of devotion and love to an atmosphere of cynicism and inhumanity. This may be added to the topics worthy of Lenten discussion in discourses to intelligent men. We should not expect any preacher to speak so plainly as we have spoken ; but we might fairly expect that so important a subject as the attachment of large numbers of men who can accept but little dogma to the religion of the Church and to its observances should be seriously treated from the pulpit during the annual season of serious religious thought.

Yet another topic which might most usefully be dealt with is a practical one—the binding obligation of fine shades of moral reasoning. This is a thing but little understood, or, indeed, thought of. We ought all to be made to understand that if upon a close comparison of moral reasons there is a balance in favour of

any course of conduct, that balance ought to bind us as absolutely as if there had been nothing whatever to be said on the other side. Reasons for the right course, six; reasons for the wrong course, none: the average man has no doubt of what he ought to do. Reasons for the right course, six; reasons for the wrong course, five: the average man becomes dubious or indifferent, whereas the balance of one ought to decide him, and leaves him without excuse. Another aspect in which this ought to be forcibly perceptible is that we ought to recognise the obligation of those rules of conduct which govern slight things, because they include the principles of great things. This was the most notable innovation of Our Lord's ethics upon the mechanical canons prevalent before His time, and, alas, prevalent still. A man was forbidden to hate by the new ethics, because the principle of hate was the principle of murder. A man was told in so many words that if he had looked upon a woman to lust after her he had committed adultery with her already in

his heart. The observance of the Sabbath is a great case in point of the necessity of holding ourselves under the control of fine shades of moral reasoning. Sabbatarian principles, in the old sense, are admittedly given up as untenable by intelligent and educated persons, though they are still taught for the convenience of impressing the young, and the author of "In His Steps" writes as if they had never been questioned. Yet it is a firm and well-justified persuasion of a great many thoughtful people that Sunday observance is just as obligatory as when it was held to be a literal fulfilment of the Fourth Commandment; and that what the Fourth Commandment effectively does is to express in terms of the early Jewish Church requirements which are those not of ceremonial or disciplinary law, but of fine spiritual feeling as it more or less naturally exists among persons of high spiritual cultivation, and as it may be instilled into persons of simpler mind.

A little while ago a well-known canon of

Westminster, Archdeacon Furse, preached on the Sabbath. He quoted Baron Bunsen as having said that the pulpit was the modern Confessional—a far better doctrine than that of the Sacerdotalists—and proceeded to ask his hearers in the Abbey whether any man could say that he could dispense with Sunday. He disavowed Sabbatic views, but he asked whether we could assert that business men and men of the world had the refinement and high feeling necessary to enable them to dispense with the grace of Sunday observance—the sanctifying one day in the week and making it holy; the fixing of the mind on sacred things; the invoking of the aid of each other in spiritual progress by the magnetism of sacred services. Few men, said Archdeacon Furse, after forty, care for poetry, and poetry is less precious and easier to keep up than religious sentiment. In these searching words we seem to have set before us the arid spiritual condition of large numbers of men of position, education, good life and means, in and around London and other large towns;

and when we feel that Sunday well spent would make all the difference to them, we feel also that, Commandment or no Commandment, the observance of Sunday under Christian conditions is spiritually and socially obligatory. Archdeacon Furse pursued the subject into lower grades of society, and testified that working men who looked back on their lives and noted declension in them often fixed on neglect of Sunday as the beginning of it. This is just as true whether the Fourth Commandment is literally binding or not, and in either case is just as intrinsically important, though the English mood is to think that nothing matters that is not required by absolute law. Archdeacon Furse in the same sermon said that a mere hour or two of Ritualistic service in the morning would not do. Meditation was needed. And he encouraged his hearers by ideas of his own as to the contrast afforded by the "mental interest in the kingdom of Christ" which now prevails —we hope it does—with the "deadly dull Sunday of sixty years ago." The value of

these considerations cannot be over-rated. Persons are known to us who utterly reject the obligation of Sabbath-keeping as a command but yet practise it as a duty, not even reading a secular book. They are so happy and so bettered by this weekly dedication of a day to religion that on them it is just as obligatory as if expressly and authentically commanded. And our present purpose is not so much to enforce this or any other practice authoritatively, but to urge that it would be an appropriate use of Lent as a time of moral straightening and inspiration to realise that no good Christian is entitled to demand a literal and verbal command for anything the spiritual obligation of which can be made out by reasoning to the conscience—even if the demonstration is vague and upon a fine balance of considerations. Sunday is only one illustration. If conduct is three parts of life, fine points of moral obligation are three parts of conduct.

CHAPTER V

Good Friday

CHAPTER V

GOOD FRIDAY

I

To think seriously with an emancipated Christian mind of our observances of Good Friday is to be plunged in many reflections, some of which are not free from theological and even spiritual embarrassment. Beyond question the death of the Saviour can never cease to be a fit and moving subject for the thoughts of Christian men and women. And according to the most popular conceptions Christian meditations are very plain sailing. All know and all feel that the death of Christ by the appointment of His Father ransomed believers in Him from the consequences of their sins and ought to ransom them from those sins themselves. But the question will

arise, except in minds which have become conventional by education, What need of any dwelling upon the gloom of what may be called the transition of the world from condemnation to redemption? There are probably in these days services on Good Friday at Dissenting chapels; but if there are they are an innovation. Such services used to be carefully avoided, first, because the Nonconformists objected to the observance of any day except Sunday; secondly, because they objected to any special commemorative or contemplative celebration of any truncated or uncompleted stage of the Redemption story. Of course they were willing and eager to dwell upon the Crucifixion as one of the subjects of their preaching ministrations, but they had a conscience against any distinct and separate celebration of any part of the system of salvation, which they regard as an indissoluble whole. It is apparent enough that in contrast with the Roman and the Anglican Church at any time, and especially with the Anglican Church now, the Nonconformist canons of

worship just spoken of were quite deficient in the dramatic element, and it is a curious subject of speculation how far the dramatic treatment of Christian themes is allowable. The late Bishop of Liverpool expressed himself averse to lantern lectures in churches, and, unless we are mistaken, his feelings will be shared by many whose ideas of reverence will, rightly or wrongly, conflict with such lectures. But this very concrete form of scenic effect is a small and accidental contributory or auxiliary of the dramatic treatment of Christian themes which has its ramifications in a great part of the Calendar.

Good Friday used, in the most ancient times, to be called Long Friday, because of the long fast. No bells were rung from Wednesday in Passion Week to Easter Sunday. What came to be called the Mass of the Presanctified was a purposely mutilated celebration of the Eucharist. Even now in Lent we find in Roman Catholic churches statues veiled and everything done to emblematise the dolorous character of the season. It was in connection

with the dramatisation of the Christian Epos that in early days the rite was introduced which produced the beginning of the Kensit excitement—the Creeping to the Cross. The Cross was held before the altar by two deacons, and a ceremony was gone through by the congregation. This was put an end to in the English Church at the Reformation, and its revival has caused a commotion in our own time, and been generally condemned as a case of "going too far." Now, why? Here is raised the interesting question, What is "going too far"? The whole spirit of the ritual observance of Church seasons is dramatic. The Christian conceives himself as at the point of each advance, and except in the manner of hope and expectation does not go beyond the point to which the Christian year brings him. In Advent he realises the prospect of the Lord's Coming; at Christmas the Lord's Coming; at the Epiphany the manifestation of Christ's Salvation to the Jews; in Lent Repentance; on Good Friday the Redeeming Sacrifice; on Easter Sunday the

Risen Lord, and the rising with Him into higher life; on Whit-Sunday the gift of Sanctification and the aid of the Holy Spirit; during the rest of the year hallowed by dedication to the Trinity, the complete and profound edification of the saint. From beginning to end the plan is, devoutly indeed, but in method, absolutely histrionic. Whence, then, the objection to dramatic accessories? That there was such an objection is clear from what took place at the Reformation. That the Reformers valued the gradual dramatic realisation of the Christian life by means of the Christian year is evident from the tenor of the Anglican Christian year as they left it in the Prayer-Book. We see it all involved in the dramatic re-realisation of the great act of salvation as depicted in the services for this day. But those who sympathise with the Reformers, and are still for carrying on the Church in their spirit, draw the line at a very spiritual form of the dramatic, and while amenable somewhat to changed manners and customs, and not always quite able to define or distinguish between

what may be and what ought not to be, stoutly prefer that all rites and accessories should be avoided which are held liable to make the dramatic realisation of Christianity mechanical, materialistic, and superstitious.

The fact of there being an Epistle and Gospel for this day is very significant. In the Roman Church there is no celebration of the Mass on Good Friday. The Reformers are asserted with good reason to have desired to supersede the over-dramatic Mass of the Presanctified by a consecration of the elements on Good Friday, and there is a reference to this in Bishop Andrewes's sermon on the Passion which proves this practice. Nothing in such a connection is more interesting, nothing throws more light on the relations of High Churchmen to the Church in different times, than an incident of this kind. Andrewes was a High Churchman of far greater authority and sanctity than any who are now engaged in identifying Anglican sacerdotalism with Roman Catholic faith and practice, but he adhered to the *modus vivendi* of the Reformers.

Dr. Pusey declared before his death that the extreme men of his own party had led the whole army into a defile. They were not persecuted for doctrine, he said, but doctrine was persecuted for them. Their ritual triumphs were in his judgment, and he said so, "arbitrariness and self-will." "They have missed," said he, "a glorious opportunity of concentrating the High Church party. I," he added, "who am no Ritualist, have retired from the field. Ritualists think every one wrong but themselves, and themselves gifted with inerrancy, though not in the abstract with infallibility. It must be very comfortable to be a Ritualist, to think oneself incapable of mistake—if it were true." Surely it may be worth while on this most holy of days for Churchmen of every school to reflect on the profound value of that great principle of preserving the essence of historic ritual while nicely discriminating against excess and superstition, which is the soul of our Reformation and of our formularies. One of the proper Psalms of to-day has been in vogue in the

Good Friday service from the very beginning of the ancient African Church. The Collects are from two of the most ancient sacramentaries, and incarnate the full spirit of redeeming and militant Christianity. The Gospel was changed at the Reformation to one from St. John for the pathetic and shining reason that St. John was an eye-witness of the Crucifixion. All this welds ancient and modern together in perfect harmony and unction. At the outset, we said that spiritual embarrassment might come of reflection on present-day aspects of Christian thought. Nothing has changed more in our time than the statements of the doctrine of the Atonement. Expiation is now more fully recognised than it used to be as of the authorship of God. Yet the older phraseology of the Communion Service in all Christian Churches tells the same truths, let us hope, to all Christian hearts. This should be the pulpit subject of Good Friday—not in minute definitions, but in inspiring associations of the various forms on which from age to age to-day's supreme doctrine has been taught.

II

The greatest of human tragedies is commemorated to-day throughout Western Christendom. And that human tragedy is also Divine. A Divine tragedy. An admitted contradiction in terms. Therefore, because dogmatically true, a mystery—a mystery much more impenetrable than many more frequently so called. Who shall fathom the depth, who shall soar to the height, of this infinitely wonderful thing? What can we know? What can we discover? "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." That is all we can know. We can know it only as through a cloud darkly, in any dogmatic sense. We can know it perfectly in an experimental sense, if we are clear in our acceptance of redemption, clear in our avoidance of sin. And the great mystery is that, so far as it is possible for our finite conceptions to understand, on this day nineteen hundred and one years ago the tragedy of Mount

Calvary was a Divine as well as human tragedy—that is to say, the Godhead, which on our system as positively as on the Epicurean, is superior to pain, suffered with us, may be said in a manner to have died with us, bore our sufferings and our punishment, in the person of One who had been tempted in all things as we are, yet had been without sin—yet in the bitterest hour since the creation of the world underwent, as we are enabled by the great sacred writers to understand, all the torture that must follow on the wickedness of mankind past, then present, and then to come.

A marvellous conception, however it arose! Talk of the hundred or two years during which it made its way and won sufficient adhesion! Talk rather of the rapidity with which it seized the human mind; never lost hold where it had gained possession; extended daily its command of the human conscience; became the mainspring of martyrdom, the final cause of all good and progress, the secret of great lives, the rule and inspiration of the conduct of thousands who did not even accept it. Look at it how you

will, "believe in it" or not, as you choose, the Crucifixion is in itself and in its countless, inestimable consequences, the greatest fact in history. What is now and ever the ideal of mankind? To be ruled by Christ crucified. Can any one suggest anything better? Call your greatest philosophers. What have they to offer? Magnificent wealth of thought; fine ideals; impenetrable logic. It is all in the Sermon on the Mount, with the consummation on the other Mount—the Mount where, as all the Christian world believes (and the Christian world is the world of civilisation), the guilt of mankind rolled off the shoulders of mankind into a gulf of welcome, dark oblivion, and is only brought up again to burden those who wantonly and defiantly refuse the great salvation.

To descend from these solemn heights to considerations of mere literature may seem out of character; but to-day is a good day on which to assert with conviction that not in all the great imaginings and grand records of men is to be found a story so sublime, or

so sublimely told, as this Crucifixion story in the Gospels. May one without irreverence divest oneself for the moment of preconceptions, and bringing-up, and early associations, and the persuasion of revelation? May one dare to look calmly and keenly at this story as a story? The more one does so, the more one knows that it is incomparable in all that is extant in the world. Dismiss its origin—disallow, if you please, its truth—conceive the processes by which it came into being by the incorporation of verbal report and the consolidation of myth. Never mind all that. What of the narrative? All ye that pass by, is there any sorrow like this sorrow? Is there in the world's experience a scene so majestically sombre, so full of solemn thrill, so searching in its appeal, so perfect in its incidents, so pregnant in its significance? Of the last indeed something may have been added by the systematising of theology, but of all the other elements of this miraculous tale it may be said that if the Crucifixion had been a mere tribal incident in the annals of an unimportant

people it must have been acknowledged the greatest description of an unapproachable tragedy that ever was made an eternal monument of man's mental power. But what is the truth? This tragedy has conquered all time and almost all the world. Of its grand mastery over human imagination and feeling there is no doubt even among those who turn to it a deaf ear and a blind mind. But what of those whose ears are unstopped and who, having been blind, now see? To them the Gospels with their limpid purity of heart are made flesh—the good tidings become fulfilled—the life of evangelic goodness becomes possible—in the great achievement of the Cross.

Yet another descent, as it may seem: from the literature aspect to that of common life. In the presence of such great themes the manners and customs of men with regard to them may seem of trivial value. But that is error. The Crucifixion conquered men, and made Christendom not by any vast, vague, undefined impression, but by seizing the individual; by enlisting him just as he stood with his ordinary, daily,

familiar ideas. So now it is of interest to note the hold the great fact and truth has on the usages of Christian rite. Of late years the cult has become much more intense. Good Friday observances have been multiplied and elaborated. On Good Friday there is no pomp and no music. Consequently it is only by genuine Christian emotion that such observances are dictated and responded to. Needless to recite the forms they take. Impertinent to analyse the feelings which they express. Censorious to call in question the sincerity and depth of this Calvary devotion. In this world —even in the religious sphere of this world— things must be taken as this world goes. The Church of England has shown itself capable of enriching the solemnity and sharpening the poignancy of its Good Friday services. But what is more remarkable is that the Nonconformists have to a large extent become observers of the day. Nay, even on Palm Sunday in Dissenting chapels may be heard Palm Sunday hymns and Palm Sunday sermons. Much more may appropriate recogni-

tion of the day and the doctrine be expected on Easter Sunday and Whit-Sunday and Christmas Day. We are recording facts, not judging them. Time was in the memory of people not yet old when the avoidance of all such celebrations of days was a point of doctrinal honour among the Nonconformists. They have now been won to see that there is nothing dangerous, nothing "Romish," nothing of declension in such a recognition of the Calendar as brings before them picturesquely and vividly the pivot verities of the Faith. Let it be quite frankly owned that this concession to old Church usage and to modern Church zeal has not been attended among the Dissenters by any decadence into that Sacerdotalism to which they hold themselves superior. Why should it be? There is nothing sacerdotal in the observance of Good Friday unless it be sacerdotal to believe and depend upon the Atonement.

Some access of the historic sense is needed indeed alike among Churchmen and among Nonconformists—among Christians of every type. We all need to know better and to

realise better the genesis and growth of theological ideas. We need to abandon sacrosanct follies. We should not unctuously revel in condemnations of the Jews of our Saviour's time, well knowing that if we had then lived, or if a similar Christ came now, our conduct would have been or would be similar to theirs. The mood and method of an intelligent man is not to echo from the teeth outwards mere catchwords of usage, but to understand how by intrinsic and irresistible force the great Divine ideas obtained their gradual mastery. Those ideas themselves we may by right of private judgment, which Hooker said we must depend upon in the last resort, scrutinise and even challenge. But all must be in reverence. All must be with insight. All must be with a knowledge of how and why these ideas gained sway and hold sway. He who reads aright the high meaning of to-day—who is able to answer himself and to tell his children "What is the meaning of this service?"—has before his mind, and can show to others, infinite and infinitely sacred aspects of truths infinite in

value and infinitely sanctifying in their effect—truths which can be shown to be entwined with and even to impregnate all the motions and aspirations of the human mind which are not confined within the sordid bounds of the physical.

CHAPTER VI

Easter Sunday

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EASTER SUNDAY

THE light-heartedness of modern religion—which is not a characteristic of any one Church, but pervades all Churches—is well typified by the greatly-increased attention that is paid to Easter. And nothing could more winningly or sacredly commend light-heartedness to Christians. The note of Easter observances was always joy. In the early days Easter Day was called the Sunday of Joy. Persons who had not properly observed Lent were repelled Paschaligaudio, from "the Sacramental delight of Easter"; and if ecclesiastical penalties were now in vogue, few would be so sincerely dreaded as this. In the spirit of an exuberant season of happy celebration, Easter was pronounced by one of the greatest of the Fathers

to be "the Queen of Festivals, excelling all others as far as the sun exceeds all other stars." Under the Christian Emperors prisoners used to be released, slaves used to be set free, at Easter. Largess was abundantly given to the poor. The general impulse was to be as joyous as possible, to make other people joyous, and to think of nothing but joy. "Christ is risen," said Christian to Christian. "Christ has risen indeed," was the response. Or else, "And has appeared unto Simon"—a very human touch. East or West, you perceive everywhere in every Christian age indications and insignia of general jubilation. In the East, where a little savagery is necessary to joy, you see an effigy of Judas hung up in a tree as long as it holds together under the gun-shots of genial Greek Church villagers. Everywhere the word is pleasure—Christian pleasure, indeed, so far as pure exuberant nothing-but-pleasure can be Christian—but pleasure of this complete and unqualified kind. Being a holiday-time in the world, as well as in the Church, Easter is indeed celebrated by many

without any reference to the Supreme Event which in the Christian year it celebrates. But a candid, or at all events a severe observer—if any one could be severe at such a time—might be led to confess that the actual Church joy of Christmas, as understood and felt by worshippers, is almost as frankly festive as the mere holiday-making enjoyments of those who celebrate Easter without going to Church. He would be a churlish Puritan who should wish to to alter this; and yet he would be a dead Christian who should not pause a little in the festivity to think what Resurrection means.

St. Augustine, of all the Fathers, is the one who may most surely be counted upon to bring experimental religion alike into the machinery of forms and into the junketings of Church feasts. And he says, "We do in this feast not only call to mind the history of our Saviour's Resurrection, but also celebrate the mystery of ours." Here is the suggestion of a grand ideal. Easter may be celebrated in any note of joy—from the lowest note compatible with innocence to the highest note expressive of spiritual

consecration. The irreducible minimum of Christian requirement ought to be that of St. Augustine—namely, 'that no one is entitled to celebrate or does fitly celebrate Easter who cannot sincerely appreciate his own spiritual salvation as expressed in the metaphorical resemblance of the story of Christ's Resurrection to the rising to a new life which is the spiritual history of every good man. When we think how much there is in this that needs to be explained and enforced—and that at the right time—and how easy it is to get away from it, though so beautifully taught in the Church formularies, it is impossible not to regret the perfunctory practice that has lately crept into vogue of omitting the sermon on Easter Day. If any of the clergy think that the true lesson of Easter can be made sure of being learnt, without being taught, they are mightily mistaken. We know quite well that the omission of the sermon is not perfunctorily meant. It arises from the great and laudable increase in the practice of Easter Communion. To depreciate this would be sad, a grievous

mistake. All the same, if Communions are multiplied, sermons should not be abandoned, and the clergy need to face—perhaps to be faced by—the fact that in abstaining from exhortation on such a day and giving themselves to rites (however devout) they are, as rites are now understood, throwing the weight of their influence and example into the mechanical and materialistic scale, as against the spiritual. A rejoicing which has solely to do with spiritual considerations loses its significance and its reason if the spiritual considerations are left out of the celebration. Where it is necessary or permissible to make such a discrimination, we might say that it is of infinitely more consequence for Christian men and women to realise what St. Augustine calls the mystery of their own resurrection, which means the beginning and establishment of their being as members of the Christian body, than to expatiate on the Resurrection of the Saviour, if that were expatiated on without reference to its inner significance to the individual believer. These are high and intense spiritual matters,

but they are capable of public discussion, and public discussion of them is desirable, because upon the way in which they are regarded will largely depend the tone and religious utility of Easter services.

The reply which any one holding such opinions is glad to receive is that in the Easter services of the Prayer-Book the spiritual aspect of the Festival is made quite as much of, nay more of, than the physical miracle. The "Anthems" substituted for the Venite, and which in the oldest days used to be recited by the congregation, when assembled before the service, begin with the sacrifice of the Divine Passover inviting to a spiritual feast in which the unleavened bread is to be Christian sincerity and truth. The risen life of the Saviour and the risen life of His people are both to be "unto God." The meaning of the Resurrection to Him and to them is death unto sin. "Christ is risen from the dead." "By man," in His Person, "came the resurrection of the dead." "In Christ shall all be made alive." Some may have thought the collect for Easter

Sunday a somewhat prosy one comparatively, and perhaps more might have been made of the theme; but while thanks are rendered in it that the resurrection denotes the opening of the gate of everlasting life, the prayer of the collect is that good desires may be put into the mind, and by continual Divine help brought to good effect. In this there is nothing mechanical or material, and the Epistle sets up the purest standard of Christian life. Risen with Christ, the Christian is to set his affection on things above. Their life is hid with Christ in God. When He appears they will be with Him in Glory. Till then all the works of the children of disobedience are to be by consequence eschewed. Of the lessons, the one narrating the institution of the Passover suggests fruitful exposition. Of the one from the first chapter of the Revelation one could hardly assert with confidence that exposition of it would be fruitful, but it is in the stateliest style of Oriental apologue, and it were a good exercise of homiletic ingenuity to elaborate the reasons of its selection.

Only the Gospel and the Second Lesson at Evening Service expressly bring in the story of the day's occurrence. The latter has the beautiful anecdote of Mary Magdalene, around whom lingers a great part of the pathos of the Saviour's life—the anecdote of that rescued woman and dedicated devotee receiving from the sacred lips the announcement that Christ was returning to His Father and His Disciples' Father, to their God and His God. "Mary Magdalene came and told the Disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her"—things which in their spiritual sense, quite independently of any material hypothesis, contain and express the whole significance and sustenance of the religious life. It may doubtless have been impressed on some minds, and on minds susceptible of the best influences in ritual, that the collect for Palm Sunday—the services and lessons of which Sunday, by the by, contain no reference to palms, or the palm entry into Jerusalem, so that suspicions of the superstitiousness of palm-rites must have been rife

among the Henry VIII. and Elizabeth Reformers, as among some persons of modern date—the collect for Palm Sunday seems to be more adequate spiritually for Easter Sunday than the comparatively prosaic one assigned to that high day. The tender love of God to all mankind is set forth, as in the best present-day faith, as the origin of the Incarnation, and the death of the Saviour; the great lesson is urged "that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility," and the prayer is "that we may both follow the example of His patience" —which may mean suffering—"and also be made partakers of His Resurrection." It is conceivable that, in placing this beautiful Easter collect a week before Easter, those who arranged the formularies may have desired to prepare Lenten minds betimes for the doctrines that Easter was authoritatively and illustratively to reveal.

CHAPTER VII

Whit-Sunday

CHAPTER VII

WHIT-SUNDAY

WHIT-SUNDAY is one of the great festivals—perhaps in dynamic capability the greatest festival—of Christianity. Yet the Church—Eastern, Western, and Anglican alike—is open to the reproach that by comparison with Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, Pentecost is neglected. This, indeed, is not true of the liturgies. The collect for Whit-Sunday, taken from the Sacramentary of Gregory, is as cogent and deeply spiritual an expression of the whole Christian life as the highest inspiration could devise. One has only to scrutinise the proper Psalms, three of the proper lessons, the Gospel, and the Epistle of the day, to perceive that every step of the Christian race is provided for in this perfect selection. But how

little is made of the day for which this liturgical provision is offered. Christmas, with its Babe of Bethleham, its Star in the East, its Magi, and its Manger; Good Friday, with its mortal agony and poignant incidents of gloom and anguish; Easter, with its Opened Sepulchre and the risen, loving majesty of the Redeemer —gather to them easily the devotion of Christendom; inflame, inspire, exhilarate the actual, though ordinary, Christian men and women. But Pentecost, with its real and ever-constant coming down of the Holy Spirit into the hearts and minds of men and consequently into the very life of the Church—so little has it been really used in our ritual and in our pulpits that the day has come to be regarded as little more than an affair of holiday jaunts and new clothes.

There will always be in religion a conflict between the subjective and the objective, or, so to put it, between the concrete and the abstract. In the present day the objective is largely and widely victorious. Nay, the tendency began very early. In the first

ages the period from Easter to Whitsuntide was continuously festal, but it was of the Easter that had passed, not of Pentecost that was coming, that the feast was redolent. In those weeks so intense was the tone of joy that it was actually unlawful to feast. The Christian might not worship kneeling. Whitsuntide, to all human spirits vital with the very life of the Spirit of God—the time ever memorable and infinitely precious, as Wheatley wrote, for the "vast diffusion of light and knowledge which were then shed on the apostles in order to the enlightening of the world," became a time for adult baptisms. A perennial and unsettled discussion arose as to whether Whit meant the white garments worn by Neophytes or the wit that descended upon men's minds by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Devout men—very devout men—were minded as on the first day of Pentecost after the first Easter. The ancient collect—read in English for the first time on Whit-Sunday, June 9, 1549, four hundred and fifty years ago, by the Calendar of the Christian year, when the

English Prayer-Book was first used, the day doubtless being reverently selected in the hope that its association with the Holy Spirit would sanctify the priceless introduction of the vernacular into public worship—that collect, so greatly valued that even one hundred and fifty years before that it had been translated into English—is a perfect statement of the whole spiritual relationship of the Christian to the Triune God, involving in its economy the entire spiritual energy and existence of every living member of the Church. With such a text, the preaching of Whitsuntide ought to be the greatest of the year. With such an article of ritual Whit-Sunday ought to find a deeper place and produce a more profound consciousness than any other of the Christian festivals. Can any one say that it does so? Are we not driven to the sad conclusion that with most of us the more spiritual the appeal the colder the response? Against this perpetual, yet now perhaps especially prevalent mechanicalism of Christian dogma-worship, the Feast of Whit-Sunday is a standing protest. Of course

you can treat even Whit-Sunday objectively and concretely if you choose. Clergymen, if they please, can preach dry, positive sermons on the Personality of the Holy Ghost, and not do one bit of good to those whom they address. They might even make picturesque the tongues of cloven flames, and produce picture and nothing more, or a sense of carnal miracle and nothing more in the minds of their auditors. To do them justice, they preach largely in the mood of the day's service, than which nothing can be more spiritual. But withal the day passes for little. Wordsworth—most Christian of poets—made a curious observation once in writing to Walter Savage Landor. He said, "All superstition tends to remove something from morality, and to substitute something in its place." By "morality" Wordsworth meant something much more than morality. At least, if we read experimental spirituality the saying remains equally true. Its significance is this—that it is not a mere matter of choice or temperament whether religion shall be for us chiefly a matter outside or chiefly a matter

within. To suggest that Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter are in any sense superstitious is far from our purpose. But who that reads the collect, the lessons, the Epistles, and Gospels for Whit-Sunday, Whit-Monday, and Whit-Tuesday can fail to open his mind to Wordsworth's great idea—namely, that religion cannot dwell to any exclusive degree in the courts of the senses and of incident without actually losing some of the life of the Spirit of God which inhabits the Holy of Holies of the changed heart; without having dangerously substituted for that life of the Spirit of God commoner motives, coarser workings of the worshipping mind, mechanical impulses of a poor mindless reverence which will leave the soul unattended, where the Diviner life would have given it sustenance and sure protection and valour for the Christian warfare?

There are two exercises of the mind in connection with the services of Whitsuntide which will convince any one of the capability of the greatest Christian themes perfectly treated for bringing out the most exquisite of intellectual

enjoyment, and the most inspiring spiritual teaching. One is to look at the proper Psalms and consider what they say to us, or more properly say for us, on the subject of the day. The other exercise is to follow the collect and the Scripture chosen for the day into the fulness and method of their spiritual teaching. First, however, let us make a remark about the Whit-Sunday and many other collects. There may be Protestants foolish enough to believe that the good prayers in the Prayer-Book are of Reformation origin. The great majority of them were written and used long before the Reformation. Read them, and you will see how little dogmatic or spiritual difference there is between the Roman and Protestant religion. The faith of the Christian Church has practically never been divided on important matters of belief and spiritual experience as embodied in recorded doctrine. The collects were all right. They were wasted because they were gabbled in Latin, and the humble faithful were relegated to more elementary and non-nourishing devotions. Thus

did the Church in the purely Roman days—to use a useful vulgarism—give herself away. Just as the Anglican Church, having, so to speak, got herself back at the Reformation, is incited by Sacerdotalists to give herself away again in this manner and in others.

Now as to the Psalms. To begin with, as a mere literary delight, it is splendid to read those ordered for Whit-Sunday—the 48th, 68th, 104th, and 145th—and to be convinced of their magnificence as four of the greatest religious lyrics in the world. Of course only ignorant pietism believes that any of them expressly refer to the coming of the Holy Ghost. Then say the thoughtless and the literal, Why use them? That is just where the beauty of our liturgical system comes in. The continuity, the eternity, the infinite applicableness of whatever has been said or sung under true religious inspiration, however varied the circumstances, is worth much more than any amount of literal application. The history of the human soul and of God's dealings with it is in every true Psalm. While one glories in the grand choice

the compilers of the Prayer-Book made, the great interest of the chants is, as we suggested just now, not in what they sing to us, but what they sing for us; what we sing in singing them, finding it in our hearts because we are devout, finding it in them because in one application or another they are eternally and vividly true. Of the many pregnant things said by the great Master of Balliol, few were more pregnant than his saying as to the way to read an ancient philosopher. "In every chapter we must ask the question, not what he meant or imagined, but what application of his words is possible." So with the Psalms that seem imperfectly applicable to Christian doctrine and experience. Read and sing them in that spirit, and the unlikeliest verses become Christian odes. But in the proper Psalms for Whit-Sunday there are no unlikely verses. "The kings of the earth are gathered. They marvelled to see such things. God upholdeth the same for ever. We wait for Thy loving-kindness in the midst of Thy temple. According to Thy name is Thy praise unto the world's

end. Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Our God shall be our guide unto death. Let His enemies be scattered. Let the righteous be glad. He maketh men to be of one mind in a house. Thou, God, sentest a gracious rain upon Thy inheritance and refreshedst the earth. Thou hast of Thy goodness provided for the poor. The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers. Praised daily be the God who helpeth us and poureth His benefits upon us. Even the God of whom cometh salvation; by whom we escape death. It is well seen, O God, how Thou goest in the sanctuary. Give thanks from the ground of the heart. God doth send out His voice; yea, and that a mighty voice. Thou deckest Thyself with light as with a garment. He maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire. The lions roar for their prey; the sun ariseth, they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens. I will praise my God while I have my being; and so shall my words please Him. My joy shall be in the Lord. I will be talking of Thy worship. The Lord is

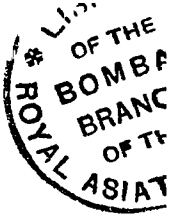
loving unto every man. The Lord upholdeth all such as fall, and lifteth up all those that are down. Righteous in all His ways, holy in all His works, nigh to all that call upon Him, will hear their cry and help them and fulfil their desire. The Lord preserveth all those that love Him."

Any clergyman with a mind and with a heartfelt sense of his vocation must be conscious that he might preach many courses of wholly new sermons on the application of such Hebrew words to the great doctrine of Pentecost which either ardently or perfunctorily has every year to be celebrated. We will not follow the four proper lessons of the day and the Epistle and Gospel in like detail. Except the Deuteronomy one, which—though something may be said for it—seems needlessly to obtrude obsolete and not very richly typical Judaism upon us, quite out of date, all the other portions are sublime in their fulness of the Spirit. Perhaps there is nothing more loftily pathetic in all literature than the Gospel (John xiv. 15, &c.), in which the Saviour of the world, moved by the parting from His

disciples which is about to come, conjures them to obey Him as they love Him, speaks of the principles of their loving, holy devotion, as if the memory of Him would suffice, but foresees that such loyalty to last and grow needs Divine support, and promises it to them. It is not good for them to be alone. He gives to them not as the world giveth. They are to be loved by His Father as He is loved. But for the guardianship of their hearts and lives another Comforter—not *a* Comforter, but *another* Comforter, a beautiful intimate touch—will come to them, whom the world will neither see nor know, but they will know Him, for He will dwell in them, and is the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of Truth. Let them not be troubled or afraid. The lesson in Isaiah, read in the Jowett spirit we applied to the Psalms, is as full of the highest spirit of the highest teaching of Christ's religion as if it had been written late—or early—in the Christian era, and the New Testament lessons leave not a fibre of Christian emotion or conscience or consciousness unmoved.

CHAPTER VIII

Trinity Sunday



CHAPTER VIII

TRINITY SUNDAY

HEINE, in one of his profanities—a sketch of the unreligious religiosity of alleged subsidised Berlin Jew-Christians—says that they fight as for life and death for the Trinity and "believe in it even in the dog days." Whatever may have been the case in Germany when Heine wrote, there is happily nothing in English life that would justify a scoffer in adopting such a tone; and yet a remotely similar thought of our unspiritual advocacy of spiritual truth may well occur to the English lay mind when our clerical assemblies break out, as they sometimes do, into heated and rigid enthusiasm for Athanasian technicalities. But it is to the honour of British religionists in general that the attention they really pay to the great mysterious doctrine turns rather on the spiritual func-

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tions of each Person of the Trinity than on that not very profitable formulation of inscrutable mystery in which it may be presumed the clerical mind in its sonorous congress mood delights. In this aspect the observance of Trinity Sunday may be a useful lesson to the thoughtful Orthodox. It could easily be made intolerable; but if Trinity Sunday were observed as it ought to be, especially in the pulpit, it would be a source of no little edification; for upon the structure of this puzzling mystery there may easily be displayed in instructive and spiritually sympathetic forms the total of what concerns the Christian in his relations with the Deity. Some affect the serener practice of Greek antiquity, when "religion was" just a "dear and beautiful tradition and holy narratives, commemorative festivals and mysteries handed down from ancestors as the sacred family rites of the people;" but this has never been the spirit of practising Christianity, which even in its most genial, trivial, placid forms is adapted earnestly to very solemn assumed needs of the

soul. The right way to regard the Trinity is not the ridiculous mechanical—not even chemical—combinations of the "Athanasian" Creed (a mere relic of primitive sectarian brawlings and phenomenal imaginative metaphysics), but a devout perception of what the doctrine in its breadth and depth can do for the religious nature. It is scarcely too much to say, as has been said, that the only truths of which we are sure are spiritual, and that the practical use of dogma in illustrating and enforcing them is literary, rhetorical, emotional, and exemplary.

We may dare—for it is a risk wisely run sometimes—to deal plainly with the clear intellectual necessities of the application of this great and mysterious theme, which, as a rule, must be dealt with in vague and reverent terms. We do so in language which some may have heard before, believing that it may bear repetition. The truth about the Trinity as received in the formulas of the Church is told us in the "Athanasian" Creed. Presumably there are persons capable of being

excited to a high degree of sympathy by chanting in a strident voice, "One Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts," "not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated," and so on. To any spiritual-minded person such expressions are repulsive, and seem scarcely possible to be reverent except in a primitive, half-barbarous age; or they would seem so but for being hallowed by associations. Are we, then, to rush to the other extreme and suppose that there is no instruction, no building-up for us in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity? If possible, that were an even greater mistake than the "Athanasian" prosaic, analytical impertinence. In this great doctrine, enduring and fruitful through so many ages, we have the whole theory and operation—the preaching and the practice—of the spiritual. Whether men pray to Jehovah, Jove, or Lord, wherever and whenever they have lived lives of holiness, of evangelism, of triumph over self and in redeeming others, the spiritual truth of the Trinity has lived and worked in them, whether they have known or have not known the

dogma, whether they have valued or rejected it. Its essence is involved in all high spiritual life, is essential for all high spiritual culture. And what is its essence? The essence for all spiritual purposes of the doctrine of the Trinity is the union for the good of all being in one never-ceasing, always various universe of the Creative, the Regulative, the Redemptive, the Exemplary, the Sanctifying forces inherent in the great Whole: constituting the Wonderful Being to whom all religion, whether dimly or brightly, has reference; keeping order in the material region; bringing light and joy and hope into all human existence; giving to all spiritual men—even the most agnostic—the benign assurance of that benevolent and elevating supremacy which was once described in a sermon as "the shrouded power which cannot err." That power creates. That power redeems. That power sanctifies. It is because the doctrine of the Trinity means this—because all true religion teaches it, whether the doctrine of the Trinity is expressly held or not—that it remains divinely dominant in Christendom.

And, because it more clearly and inspiringly to human nature than any other form of dogma conveys the necessary truths of theological experience, it will gradually gain universal supremacy. One cannot but feel that it is a great tribute to Orthodoxy that when a Thom, a Martineau, or a Beard effectually teaches experimental religion he substantially applies the whole Trinitarian doctrine which in its articular form he cannot accept.

The question for mankind is not whether the niceties attributed to St. Athanasius are authentic or provable or "necessary to salvation," but whether the Holy Spirit has got into the heart, whether He is enabled to do so by the life and sacrifice of the Son, and whether that life and sacrifice was the sublime fruit of the Divine Paternity of the Father, necessarily merciful and redeeming by the very law of His Divinity. This age would not need to be ashamed of itself if it were led up by Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Whit-Sunday to this profound, but untechnical, comprehension of vital verities. To what extent does the

Church service help? The collect—again ancient and Gregorian—is dry compared with that for Whit-Sunday. It was not quite easy to arrange the Scripture for a Sunday which celebrates a doctrine which, in the Holy Writings, is more implied than taught, and which was left to be worked out by the Church. But the selection is good, and in the main spiritual. The Epistle, indeed, is Apocalyptical, and the Gospel is as if for Whitsuntide, but Pentecost of necessity includes the Trinity. The first lesson, part of Isaiah vi., is in a solemn vein of mystic drama and spectacle. Genesis xviii. has the curious Oriental legend of God appearing as three men and foretelling that Sarah would have a son and that Sodom would be destroyed; and this chapter, except as an illustration of early mythic literature, might perhaps have been omitted. Matthew iii. is ingeniously chosen for the narrative of Christ's baptism, and includes by implication and in action the whole doctrine of the day. The beginning of Revelation i. is in the finest style of its vein. The

gem, however, is Ephesians iv. to verse 17, one of those noble and replete Pauline expositions in which the whole system of our religion seems to be embodied in its purest, most convincing, and most devotional spirit.

CHAPTER IX

Accession Day

CHAPTER IX

ACCESSION DAY

[DELIVERED BEFORE THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA]

THERE are few more beautiful services, scarcely any more inspiring and instructive, none more patriotic, than the service for the 20th of June. Why is it so generally omitted? To reply to this question calls for considerable historical learning and some confidence as to the moods of the passing times. There has been a kind of question as to the validity of the Royal power in prescribing the service. There can be little doubt of it, however. On the page of the Prayer-Book upon which the service concludes there are two injunctions, one signed by Lord John Russell, and the other by Mr. Walpole, each as Home Secretary, in which

the authority of the Crown in the matter is assumed, and though there has been a case in which a clergyman was in process of being brought to book for refusing to perform the service, it is impossible to suppose that he would have been held free to do so if he had not escaped by submission the judgment of the Court. The fact that the other "State Services" were by Royal power in response to addresses from both Houses of Parliament disused implies that the Accession Service is lawfully obligatory. A much worse use might be made of Royal authority than to require it to be more generally employed.

In different reigns variations of this office have been ordered. James II. enjoined in the "hymn" or collected verses of Psalms the following words: "Their device is only to put him out whom God will exalt; and the strange people will dissemble with him." As most of the dissembling was on the King's side, and as it was very necessary that he should be "put out," this pious excerpt did not render James's Accession Service accept-

able. And, indeed, it is pretty obvious that under a State Church system the head of the Church may occasionally misuse the privilege of getting himself prayed for. But on a balance of considerations a service devoutly prepared, treating mainly of those general facts which pertain to the Royal succession and the national weal as involved in it, must be very ill done if it be not beneficial in its influence on the national mind. This idea was very poetically elaborated by Keble:—

"One rock amid the weltering floods,
One torch in a tempestuous night,
One changeless pine in fading woods—
Such is the thought of love and might.

True might and ever-present love
When death is busy near the throne,
And sorrow her keen sting would prove
On monarchs orphaned and alone.

O promise of undying love!
While monarchs seek thee for repose,
Far in the nameless mountain cove
Each pastoral heart thy bounty knows.

Ye, who in place of shepherds true
Come trembling in their awful trust,
Lo here the fountain to imbue
With strength and hope your feeble dust."

Clearly the Divine love to a nation is expressed, not merely in pity or favourable regard, but in such dispositions of power and authority as most conduce to the national well-being. The subjects of Queen Elizabeth, in their genial loyalty to her, were encouraged in her Accession Service to thank God in that in putting her in the kingdom He had "delivered the people of England from danger of war and oppression, both of bodies by tyranny and conscience by superstition, restoring peace and true religion, with liberty both of bodies and minds." Who can gainsay the truth that a nation which knew this and appreciated it must have been all the better for solemnly reciting it in the presence of God and in communion with Him? The service pretty much as we have it—and seldom perform it—is about one hundred and seventy years old. It is very admirable, and the

more so because it is purely petitionary and has no special references. In one of the rubrics the Sovereign is described as "Supreme Governor of this Church"—meaning of the Church of England—as assuredly she with the authority of Parliament is, and the whole service is a noble expression and remembrancer of those qualities and faculties and characteristics which the nation as Church has a sacred right to exact of the nation as State. In the modification of the ordinary morning prayers, observe the fitness of the sentences at the beginning; the splendid collocation of verses in the composite substitute placed for the Venite. They do not solely refer to the Queen. They associate her felicity with every national grace; but the verses that do refer to her have a splendid wealth of loyal devotion. "Look upon the face of Thine anointed. Grant the Queen a long life, and make her glad with the joy of Thy countenance. Let her dwell before Thee for ever. O, prepare Thy loving-kindness and faithfulness that they may preserve her. In her time let the

righteous flourish, and let peace be in all our borders. As for her enemies, clothe them with shame; but upon herself let her crown flourish." The sacred literature of our religion yields for every circumstance of life, great and small, individual and of the community, great themes of praise, great burdens of prayer.

But in a self-governing country—and free long before it was self-governing—it is necessary, if our devotion is to penetrate our life, that the needs of mind and soul and of the commonwealth should be expressed in language more exactly applicable than that of Scripture can be. Scripture is once more appropriately used for the lessons, and then occur several remarkable collects, part of which, in consideration of their completeness as a conspectus of political felicity and duty under a monarchy, we shall not hesitate to cite, persuaded that no inconsiderable number of our readers will be the better for reading what they have never heard: "Let Thy wisdom be her guide, and let Thine arm strengthen her; let justice, truth and holiness,

let peace and love, and all those virtues that adorn the Christian profession, flourish in her days; direct all her counsels and endeavours to Thy glory, and the welfare of her people; and give us grace to obey her cheerfully and willingly for conscience sake; that neither our sinful passions, nor our private interests, may disappoint her cares for the publick good; let her always possess the hearts of her people, that they may never be wanting in honour to her Person, and dutiful submission to her authority; let her reign be long and prosperous, and crown her with immortality in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Few will read these words without a double satisfaction, that national duty and happiness are so stated in a Prayer-Book prayer, and that to so great an extent what ought to be the national petition has been granted.

In another of the collects it is asked that the Queen may be hidden from the gathering together of the froward and from the insurrection of wicked doers, and the prayer for her Majesty to be protected by God is very

noble in the strength and simplicity of its phraseology. In the Communion Service there is a special prayer for the Sovereign, in which her official spiritual relations with her people are finely set out, according to the theory of Church Establishment. Christian princes are called for the defence of the faith. "Thou hast made it their duty to promote the spiritual welfare, together with the temporal interest of their people." For the Queen the people beseech "all those heavenly graces that are requisite for so high a trust. Make her a blessed instrument of protecting and advancing Thy truth wherever it is persecuted and oppressed. Let hypocrisy and profaneness, superstition and idolatry, fly before her face." In the Epistle, having had this ideal of State government presented to them, the liberty of the people is recognised, for they are exhorted to behave "as free, and not using their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." Surely this service ought to be annually read in church on this day. To suppress it is to ignore a great opportunity

of raising the quality of the citizenship of the English people; and if it is in desuetude because High Churchmen do not like its wholesome Erastianism, there never was a worse reason for a bad defect.

The Establishment

CHAPTER X

Church and State

CHAPTER X

CHURCH AND STATE

To have an Established Church may be a good thing. To deliberately establish a Church may be a good thing. One may conceive of this being done—though it is not a very likely thing to happen—in favour of a sect or section of the community. Parliament can do anything—with one proverbial exception; and if the Legislature, for instance, were to say that the Baptist denomination, though admittedly neither co-extensive with the nation nor in a majority, should be declared the Church of the country, and should be endowed with the tithes, that would be done. But it is not in this manner that the Church of England has been established. Not only is there no vote of the Legislature to show for its existence and its

endowments, but that existence is based on a principle to which legislative votes would be totally irrelevant. That principle is that the Church is the nation and the nation is the Church. This may be out of date in fact. It is not obsolete. As a matter of fact, communing members of the Church are a minority of the nation. But as a matter of law every citizen has a right to the services of the Church's ministers. The property of the Church is the nation's property, because the Church is theoretically co-extensive and identical with the nation. Hence also the absolute control of the Legislature over the Church, and over what is called Church property. The Legislature might, if it chose, in a single session entirely alter the constitution, the dogmas, the ritual of the Church, and appropriate Church revenues at its pleasure. Whatever objection there might be to this would be a moral not a legal objection. There is no doubt about the law. Parliament is all-powerful in Church matters, as Convocation is utterly impotent. And the foundation of

this state of the law is that, however absurd or inconsistent it may seem under modern conditions, the Church has no existence before the Law except as the nation acting as a whole in a religious capacity. The anomaly may be intolerable, but no attempt to remove it would be tolerated. At all events, it can only be removed by such statutory legislation as has never yet been attempted—by statutory legislation vesting a reconstituted Church of England, reconstituted on sectarian instead of national principles, with the rights and the privileges and property which it now enjoys solely as in theory identical with and indistinguishable from the nation.

Yet there are persons so blind to the meaning of the Law, or so confident of their power of insidiously modifying it, that they choose to treat the Church as enjoying the privileges of a sect, though possessing its real privileges only as the nation acting in a religious capacity. Even Bishop Barry, one of the clearest-headed of English ecclesiastics, adopts the extraordinary assumption that the power of

Parliament—which is the nation making and promulgating the law by which the nation chooses to be governed—is limited as to Church matters, and only extends to seeing that the law is observed, and that nothing is done by the Church against the public welfare or to override individual rights. All such limitations are absurd. Parliament makes law as well as enforces law. Parliament could make the Church Mahometan or Positivist if it chose. If it puts up with the present state of things it does so for fear of getting something worse than the present anomaly, or of throwing everything into anarchy. Bishop Barry says that now the Legislature is not an assembly of lay Churchmen the principle of Church self-government should be asserted. It may be asserted, but it is unknown to and unknowable by the Constitution. In the eye of the Law, and in actual fact, Parliament could do as it pleased with the Church if every member of Parliament were a Hindoo. Bishop Barry says that something like anarchy prevails in ritual because the old iron system

of Uniformity is of a pattern unsuited to the present day. If so, Parliament can alter it—with what success may be inferred from the effects of Mr. Disraeli's Public Worship Regulation Act. Things will go on as they are because parties in the Church will not compel politicians to act, being themselves too sharply divided, too jealous; and because one set of politicians content themselves with resisting Disestablishment and because the other great set of politicians find Disestablishment too big a job. Only in the way of either leaving things alone in their entirely Erastian condition, or of disestablishing the Church, will Parliament ever act. If the Liberal party were to come back in great strength, and were to fight the House of Lords with the people at their back, the Welsh Church Establishment (so-called) and the Scotch Church Establishment would be abolished. Then the case of the English Church Establishment might be approached. But whether it be approached or not, there will never be any effective exercise of Parliamentary rubrical

discipline, and still less any delegation of national rubrical discipline to the Church as an acting and corporate body.

It is highly important to realise the true state of the case, because no man can tell what may be the mood of the nation by the time the case of the Church of England comes up for treatment. The old Whig idea was Comprehension. Many think that a better ideal than Disestablishment. That it should revive is quite on the cards. Already Sacerdotalism seems to be waning in its fortunes. Criticism of ancient documents is having an immense disintegrating effect on dogma. Who knows but that within a measurable distance of time it may be seen to be intellectually absurd to exclude from the Church, which is the religious expression of the nation, ideas which are the common property and common conversation of educated men? With such ideas abroad and in print in every household in the most widely-read publications, it is preposterous to suppose that the nation, acting in Parliament, will enact a sectarian limitation of the

Church and a sectarian appropriation of its funds. Granted that Dissenters and active Church people may take fright at any idea of Rationalist Comprehension, and may prefer Disestablishment, in the belief that the Church and the Sects will vie in the maintenance of dogma. That is likely enough. But, observe, this brings us no nearer to; it removes us farther from, Bishop Barry's ideal of a Church of England governed by Church people. That will never be. The nation will either by vote declare that it will no longer nationally perform religious functions (which is Disestablishment), or it will make the Established Church more representative of the whole people (which is Comprehension). Shortly after Mr. Wakeford came to Liverpool he was interrupted by the President's bell at a diocesan Conference in protesting in a very noble vein against the Church being supervised by the State. Just as the bell sounded Mr. Wakeford was saying, "Why the Church rocked the cradle of the State." That is true—the Church in that sense mean-

ing certain great ecclesiastics of our early reigns. But the State grew and revolted against its nurse, and against being rocked, and leaped from its cradle, and itself became the Church. That is the present state of the Church by English Law. If fact is otherwise upon counting noses, fact may be reconciled to Law by measures of Comprehension. If not, of two things one—either the present anomaly will continue indefinitely or there will be Disestablishment and Disendowment and the appropriation of the Tithes to good secular uses. A self-governing Church of England in possession of Establishment and Endowment there will never be, let Bishop Barry "assert the principle" never so vehemently.

CHAPTER XI

A Franker Erastianism

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A FRANKER ERASTIANISM

WHAT is really needed if the Church of England is to continue a State Church is a franker and more systematic Erastianism. And if the public get really excited this will come. It has long been evident that the Church cannot be efficient without a systematic revisal of the incomes of the clergy and the manner of their appointment. This is one of the things that a franker Erastianism would effect, though it is only a small part of a very large field. We have used the phrase "a franker Erastianism" intentionally, because it is necessary to face the fact—the fact being that if there is to be discipline in the Church, as Lord Salisbury says there is not at present, the State must assert a stronger and more definite authority.

If the Protestant agitation were real and effective, stronger State control would come. If you want logic or discipline, there is no half-way house between Disestablishment and Erastianism; and this ought to be generally understood, so that intelligent people may see what is before them if anything serious is to be done. When we say Erastianism, we use the word in its current signification—a signification which will be found supported by several dictionaries of authority. For instance, Ogilvie, while saying that an Erastian is "one whose opinions are the same or akin to those of Thomas Erastus, a German divine of the sixteenth century," asserts that Erastus "maintained the complete subordination of the ecclesiastical to the secular power." Again, Webster says that "in the present day an Erastian is one who would see the Church placed entirely under the control of the State"; describing the opinions of Erastus thus: "He held that the punishment of all offences should be referred to the civil power, and that Holy Communion was open to all." For practical purposes the

definition of Erastianism given in these two quotations is enough; and when we read, as we have often read lately, that Mr. Gladstone, like the Dissenters, and along with the High Church and along with Cardinal Manning, was the very reverse of an Erastian, the meaning is that he was strongly opposed to all control of Church faith and practice by State authority.

A valued and always well-informed friend is troubled, however, by a failure to perceive that "a franker Erastianism" could have any bearing in the present controversy. He says: "I always thought that Erastianism meant the denial of the right of the Church to discipline its members. That was the doctrine of Erastus and his followers—and you will find in Worcester's Dictionary that Erastianism still means the same. How would that remedy the revolt of the Ritualists against the Thirty-nine Articles, or against the limitation of ritual? Has the word changed its meaning?" The doctrine of Erastus was really broader, and led on to wider consequences than this definition includes; but it is certainly true that the first

contention of Erastus was as above stated. Murray tells us in apt citations how the secession of the Non-jurors led to a "predominance of the worldly and Erastian element"; how Baxter disclaimed Erastianism, and pronounced Erastians more dangerous snares to kings than were sectaries, though one cannot guess why; how Froude noticed the acceptance of Anglican Erastianism by many high dignitaries of the time covered by his History; and how Cardinal Newman spoke of our Erastianising bishops. In all these passages the sense is ours. As to how "a franker Erastianism" would remedy the revolt of the Ritualists or effect any other object in Church discipline, it is plain enough that the State, whatever may be its rightful authority, has actual authority in great things and small, and that Parliament can establish and enforce whatever regulations it pleases, being capable either of carrying out the Rubrics and Articles or of more explicitly defining them in order to their being carried out, or of making new Rubrics, Formularies, and Articles, and of imposing them absolutely

upon the clergy. Obviously, therefore, Erastianism, if it were carried to the utmost possible point, would be practically omnipotent in Church regulation. And our meaning in thrusting this phrase upon our readers is that they should recognise how very irregular, halting, imperfect, and accidental the regulation of Church Services now is; and that they should be made fully aware of the extent of the powers of the State if the Erastian system is carried out—the principle of Erastianism being in our judgment absolutely inherent in and inseparable from the State Establishment of a Church.

We now proceed—because this is a deeply interesting, though to some an elementary subject—to state with more precision and on good available popular authority what Erastianism originally was. Chambers's Encyclopædia says: "Erastus denied the right of the Church to excommunicate, exclude, absolve, censure — in short, to exercise discipline. Denying 'the power of the keys,' he compared a pastor to any professor of science, who can

merely instruct his students; he held that the ordinances of the Gospel should be open and free to all, and that penalties, being both in their nature and effect civil and not spiritual, ought to be inflicted only by the civil magistrate. Many eminent men, especially in the Church of England, have shared similar opinions both before and after Erastus, such as Cranmer, Redmayn, Cox, Whitgift, Selden, &c. The term Erastian has long been a favourite epithet of reproach in Scotland; but has not been employed with any great precision. All persons who deny the power of an Established Church to alter her own laws without the consent of the State—as, for example, the law of patronage—are generally accused of Erastianism, although the principles of Erastus have literally nothing to do with such a question." This last statement coincides with the suggestion of our friend given above, but we rather demur to it, and will give high authority for our demurrer. At all events, we may say that conversely Erastus is responsible for the modern ideas associated with his name,

because if the Church is not to exercise discipline, and discipline is to be exercised, the State must exercise it.

Hallam points out that the questions which are associated with Erastianism came into importance in the sixteenth century by the increased frequency and impact of circumstances connected with the establishment of national State Churches. The ecclesiastical power of the chief of the State and the religious liberty of nonconforming subjects were these questions. A perpetual superintendence of the civil power over the Church's faith and practice was the theory of the English Reformation, and was elaborated by the great Hooker. But it was equally contrary to the doctrine of Rome, of the High Church in England, of Scottish Presbyterians, and of the English Nonconformists, who gradually organised themselves, always on the principle of being under God only their own authority. In 1613, as Hallam conveniently recites, the learned and cogent Grotius strongly formulated what is now known as the Erastian theory,

and what was practically involved in the original proposal of Erastus. Having elaborated his plan and illustrated it by the changes of English national faith under Henry, Mary, and Elizabeth, he admitted the danger of abuse from leaving too much power in the hands of the Sovereign, but he replied, says Hallam, that "no other theory would secure us better. On every supposition the power must be lodged in men, who are all liable to error. We must console ourselves by a trust in Divine Providence alone." The treatment of this subject by Grotius is exhaustive.

One very strong chapter of his argument deals with the absolute control of the Sovereign over the placing and securing of clergymen in benefices. Here, indeed, the practice of State authority in England is much, in effect, restrained—but how and why? In deference to spiritual authority? No. But in acknowledgment of the glorious and indefeasible rights of property, each living being a freehold. This it is that makes ecclesiastical jurisprudence practically a dead letter because of its expense.

That is not an unmixed evil, for it gives a liberty within the Church that cannot possibly be had under the Wesleyan Conference, or in any so-called "Free Church." Good or bad, however, so it is. A "franker Erastianism," unless the Erastianism declared frankly and expressly for the comprehension of large varieties of faith, practice, and ritual, would put an end to that liberty so conspicuously enjoyed in the Church. It is between the present liberty and any desire for stricter control that the British Parliament—and that is an odd detail, for it includes Irish Catholics and Scotch Presbyterians and English Dissenters—has to choose. In contemplation of such a system of absolute State rule in Church matters, foreshadowed by Erastus, and elaborated by Grotius, Hallam says: "This is the full development of an Erastian theory which Cranmer had early espoused, and which Hooker had maintained in a less extensive manner. Bossuet has animadverted upon it, nor can it appear tolerable to a zealous Churchman. It was well received in England by the

lawyers, who had always been jealous of the spiritual tribunals. The scheme is open to some objections when propounded in so unlimited a manner. It tends to convert differences of religious opinion into crimes against the State, and furnishes bigotry with new arguments as well as new arms in its conflict with the free exercise of human reason." From all which it would appear that for Parliament or the law to repress anything in the Church of England is not such a simple and easy matter as many people suppose. Even the theory upon which it can be proposed is difficult to propound in language which will not lie open to the imputation of being loosely popular.

CHAPTER XII

The Prayer-Book and Sacerdotalism

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THE PRAYER-BOOK AND SACERDOTALISM

THE sense of humour is not always combined with the historic sense. Any person who has both must experience a sardonic amusement in hearing men gravely prove against each other by extracts from the Prayer-Book that the Church of England does, or does not, approve of sacerdotal doctrine. It is not inconsistent with a sense of humour and a sense of history to say that it does neither. It is quite consistent with a sense of humour and a sense of history to say that it does both. But to say that it does either to the exclusion of the other is to say what cannot be heard without a smile by any one who realises the facts of the English Reformation. It would be a long tale to tell

what actually happened, and to do so would require something more than a mere sense of history, but the latter suffices to assure us that the Reformers who met together or conferred in order to arrange the Church on its new basis did a good deal of give-and-take, and did it not only as between themselves, but as between them and the Church in England at large, and at that time that meant the people of England as a whole. The nation ecclesiastically, and to a certain extent religiously, was passing through an extraordinary crisis. Partly through abuses and scandals, partly through growing light in Divine things, partly through political and personal misunderstandings between King Henry VIII. and the Pope, there had occurred and was being completed a severance of the Church in England from the Church of Western Christendom. This was regarded even by the moving participators in it with very various feelings. They were Reformers in very various degrees and in very various religious moods. The mind of the country was chiefly affected by such men

as Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and Cranmer. These men and others contributed, some in the pulpit, some in publications, and some by liturgical authorship or adaptation, to the development of the Reformation. Most people think that if these could have had their own way that development would have been much more radical and complete. If it had been, it is pretty certain that piety of the tone of that of Andrewes would scarcely have been known, and the sacerdotal revolution of our age, known by the name of the Oxford Movement, would not have occurred. Nor should we have had any of the present troubles.

The best way to understand what took place in the compilation and settlement of the Prayer-Book is to consider those who took part in it as a sort of committee. One man, we may say for the purpose of this illustration, would propose something or produce a draft formulary or rubric for acceptance. Another man would say that that would never do. It would offend such a person, or such a knot of persons, or such a diocese, or run counter to the solidarity

and endanger the accomplishing of the unity in such and such a way, or it would alienate too many of the old faith, or it would fail to satisfy people enough who had embraced the new faith. Then perhaps a qualification would be suggested and tried, and tried in all sorts of ways. Each section and person would go as far as possible to meet the others; but could not go farther. Perhaps a counterbalance or compensation in another part of the book would be proposed. Present to the minds of the whole "committee" would be the knowledge that the people had been but imperfectly weaned from Rome, and as yet had not been sustained or fed upon spiritual food of a non-Roman sort. Thus compromise would come to be the very breath of the Committee's nostrils, and when compromise could not be got into the form of an agreed document, it would be got into the thereafter troublesome form of two or more disagreeing or not well-agreeing documents, neither absolutely incapable of being accepted all round, but none giving all-round satisfaction. Let it be quite understood that all this would

be done with devout anxiety, and no doubt in many cases with much prayer, but the result could hardly fail to be confused and contradictory, and those of our present-day clergy who quote what "our Church teaches" in unctuous and positive tones in their pulpits or on platforms either do not realise the facts of the Reformation settlement, or they have a faith in the Divine guidance given in such circumstances which must be even more robust than that which is required to accept the now generally abandoned tenet of verbal inspiration.

It is interesting to find in John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland, a proof that this comparatively politic and prudential quality of the English Reformation was well understood by contemporaries. In the preface to his Fourth Book the great Scottish Reformer expresses his rejoicing at the nature of the Scottish Reformation. The Protestants had little force, were few in number, and had no wisdom or worldly policy, but they brought their enterprise to a good end. And he says, "In how great purity did God establish among

us His True Religion, as well in doctrine as in ceremonies." He goes on "boldly to affirm that there is no realm this day on the face of the earth that hath them in greater purity" than Scotland. Then he thinks of England and its diplomatic, politic, Prayer-Book Reformation, and he breaks forth: "Yea—we must speak the truth whomsoever we offend—there is no realm that hath them in like purity." In justification of this boast, and that it might not seem injurious, he describes how the English and other non-Scottish Reformations were made. "All others," than Scotland, says he, "how sincere so ever the doctrine that by some is taught—retain in their churches, and in the ministers thereof, some footsteps of an Anti-Christ, and some dregs of Papistry; but we, all praise to God alone! have nothing in our churches that ever flowed from that Man of Sin." This, he adds, was because they, the Scots, esteemed not themselves wise in their own eyes, but understanding their wisdom to be foolishness before God, laid it aside and followed on that which God approved. "In

that point could never our enemies cause us to faint. In that point our God hath strengthened us till the work was finished," as the world may see."

The world has seen, ever since; and Presbyterian Protestantism, so far as questions between Protestantism and Rome are concerned, has remained to this day without deviation or vicissitude what John Knox and those who stood by him made it. On, the other hand, for good or for evil, the Church of England has had a chameleon or varying piebald history, as the composite character of its formation suggested to John Knox that it must have. We are not dogmatising except as to the facts. We are not saying whether it was well or ill to retain in the Church of England so much of the old Catholic tradition. Perhaps it could not be helped. Perhaps Royal patronage and Royal supremacy were too much for the stern spirituality of the stricter Reformers. Perhaps, again, without that patronage and supremacy there could have been no English Reformation at all; for though we had sturdy faithful

martyrs, the English as a nation were not so fervid as the Scotch. However this may be, and however much we may lament the legacy of confused faith, belated ceremony, and materialist sentiment which Anglican timidity or unhandiness in the sixteenth century has handed down to us, it is at least useful as a matter of accuracy to understand the abiding cause to which sacerdotal troubles must be attributed in our Protestant Church whenever they arise.

CHAPTER XIII

The Reform of Convocation

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THE REFORM OF CONVOCATION

[THIS "SERMON" WAS DELIVERED AT A CHESTER DIOCESAN CONFERENCE IN 1877]

ANY layman addressing an audience largely clerical on a subject such as the reform of Convocation must feel considerable hesitancy in expressing himself. He knows that he is touching upon matters, unfamiliar to him, which are the daily business and study of his auditors; and his own observations of the crudities and mistakes of amateurs in other departments must infect him with a salutary dread of the criticism of experts to which he is about to expose himself. Nevertheless, the admission of lay essayists and speakers to free conference with the clergy is of manifest utility

in awakened times, and the advantages of it are perhaps greatest when laymen on such occasions entirely avoid any deliberate affectation or imitation of clerical tones and modes of thought, and strive to convey to such of the clergy as they have the honour of addressing what they feel and think, or their estimates of what is thought and felt by the laity at large. This shall be my endeavour. And what I have to say will be more in the way of amending and cautionary criticism than of constructive suggestion.

Convocation is a survival of the time when the Church practically meant the clergy, and when "Churchman" stood for cleric, the sense in which it is used in the introduction to the Articles. But the *revival* of Convocation was chiefly owing to an entirely new interest of the laity in Church matters. The old manner of regarding the clergy and the Church as interchangeable expressions seems, in these days, equally distasteful to earnest religionists of all types, and the highest Churchmen have most effectively systematised the participation

of laymen in Church affairs. Along with this change of opinion has grown a feeling or assumption, now rather widely spread, that the Church as a spiritual corporation ought to have something like free self-government—ought not to pay for its State advantages so heavy a price as an inferiority to sects and denominations in organic vigour and efficiency.

Many people, indeed, share this feeling who have never appreciated its consequences. For instance, how few have perceived that the Church as a Church could hardly find itself entrusted with its own government without taking steps to do away with the present system of patronage! Those steps need not be precipitate, but they would have to be decisive, and, perhaps, even prompt. The Church, if really managing itself, would have to station and pay its ministers with reference to their fitness and the kind and relative importance of spheres of labour. This will probably be found incontrovertible by those who contemplate the functions of a real governing body along with

the preposterous anomalies, the deplorable waste of power, and the lamentable deficiencies incident to the existing system. And if they see it, they will probably be startled to discover what real Church government would involve. But, however imperfect may be the conceptions which actuate the longing for corporate Church action, it most distinctly and largely exists; nor is there reason to suppose that those who earnestly wish that the Church should be spiritually governed for the sake of attaining the soundest spiritual condition would shrink from any legitimate consequence of the responsibility with which they desire the rulers of the Church to be invested. When we ask who those rulers are to be, Convocation presents itself with a tempting likeness in its history to that of Parliament. True, its proceedings were suspended for more than a century, but its deliberate scope grew, like that of Parliament, from small and sordid beginnings, and the dream of many Churchmen is that its power of action should increase as that of Parliament has increased; and that its

composition should be liberalised as that of Parliament has been liberalised.

Another new element has been introduced into the question of Convocation Reform by the prominence which has of late been given in certain agitations to the union (I would much rather say the identity) of Church and State. A separation between Church and State—or, to be more faithful both to law and fact—a laying aside by the nation of its character as a Church, is at present as little to be apprehended as desired. I am a Liberal in politics. I do not believe a national establishment of religion to be required by first principles. I have little expectation that our Establishment will be permanently preserved. But it is so conspicuously venerable and useful, it affords such pre-eminent advantages for the growth and protection of liberal religion, it is so exactly adapted for the maintenance of a practicable degree of spirituality over a large surface of the community, it may be so easily associated with any form of revival agency, its facilities for

the homeliest and wholesomest philanthropy are so unfailing and elastic, and it is on the whole so comfortable, consolatory, and inoffensive to the great mass of the people, that I cannot help thinking it safe for many years—probably for many decades—to come.

Yet we cannot hide from ourselves that its dissolution is more or less suspected to be hovering in advance. An eminent clergyman once expressed to me a keen satisfaction that, owing to recent voluntary developments of Church life, Disestablishment, if it came—and he thought it ought to be kept in view—would find us admirably prepared. The *Times* newspaper—which is supposed to know the way of the wind, and which in ecclesiastical matters is conducted with marked ability, though in a rude and superficial spirit—concluded some comments on a certain discussion in a Church Congress by suggesting that "in such gatherings we may be feeling our way towards some freer organisation of Church life than that which at present prevails among us." My own opinion is that freer we can never be

with safety to the integrity of the Church, and that if we strive too hastily for more efficiency than is consistent with a comparatively powerless Convocation, the Church will begin to narrow and the State will begin to discontinue its official recognition of religion.

Nothing, however, that is grossly unreal is tolerable, and there is much need of services which Convocation without added powers can render. It is, therefore, necessary to understand what must be done to make Convocation useful within its own limits, which it will be if made responsible, intelligibly active, and reasonably interesting to all who are not absolutely indifferent to religious phenomena. If Disestablishment is not approaching there is no necessity for eagerly preparing for it; but it may be possible to secure in Convocation a salutary medium of what, for want of a less objectionable word, we must call denominational efficiency, without sacrificing the Church's national character. This should be aimed at before everything. Whatever is done saga-

ciously in this spirit must be advantageous, be the future what it may; and it will leave the future to form itself in the true historical manner of our Church, without precipitating a revolution which the natural working of the principles of that Church, as reconstituted by the Tudors and resettled by William of Orange's Whigs, ought to render for ever unnecessary.

Now, of the principal reforms suggested, two appear so clearly essential as not to call for argument. The Synods of the two provinces of Canterbury and York must be united if the deliberations of the representatives of the clergy are ever to be more important than those of a select and distinguished debating society. The *ex-officio* element must be greatly curtailed, or at any rate the parochial clergy must return a far larger proportion of the members, if Convocation is in any true sense to represent the Church. So far all is clear. When we get beyond these two points, there is much more difficulty. Shall the laity sit in Convocation? Or shall they sit separately in

a consultative chamber? To these questions I answer in the negative. I even give my voice against the laity having votes for members of Convocation. In all such proposals may be scented denominationalism, and the absence of denominationalism is the highest merit and the feature most fruitful of promise in a national Church.

If you give votes to the laity, you only give votes to your congregations—perhaps only to your communicants; but it will be a sad day for our "all-collecting, none-excluding Church" when she begins to regard any Englishmen as heathen men and publicans, or when she even rudely disowns or ignores the obligation of giving reasonable satisfaction—so far as is consistent with vital truth—to the judgment of the community in religious matters, so far as it can be arrived at.

While the immediate result of giving a Convocation suffrage to what are called, in a narrow sense unknown to true English spiritual citizenship, members of the Church, would be to turn our communion into a sect, the return

of a consultative chamber, which could only be done at the same cost, would entail a further considerable evil. As a matter of fact, men elected and willing to serve in such an assembly would mainly be of the sort to applaud and support, and even caricature, the clergy's most inexcusable mistakes. You ask how this could be unless the laity generally were of the same mind. The answer is that the rational laity would take no trouble. Fussy and clergy-courting laymen would get returned, and would encourage the clerical objects of their affection and admiration to raise stone walls to run their heads against in all directions. For instance, if it took place at the present moment, they would back up your burial policy. But your burial policy is gone and done with. The Primate, and Lord Harrowby, and the House of Lords have given it the *coup de grace*. Not even the present House of Commons could now be induced to support it. A consultative chamber which should advise you to persist in it would invoke upon the Church the mortification of defeat,

the contempt of general society, and the bitter hostility of thousands of virtuous religious citizens. You may say, "What matter, if we are right? Let us be in a minority, but let us follow our consciences." That is all very well, but one does not wish to see the salt of the earth reduced to a mere pinch. The rational laity cannot imagine St. Paul, or even St. Peter, having insuperable conscientious scruples on such a subject. They are distinctly against any fussy members of their own order in the Church having an opportunity of assisting in a course so unwise as that on which the clergy seem resolved.

The addition of laymen to Convocation as full sitting members would be open to all the preceding objections, and to one more, which is of great weight. It would alter the whole spirit of the relations between the Church, so far as it is corporate, and the nation, so far as it is purely secular. Hitherto, the temporalty has imposed its terms upon the spiritualty and its action has been solemnised by the responsibility of doing so. The spiritualty

has, directly or indirectly, negotiated and submitted, with the admirable result that the Church of England is the wisest and broadest in the world. Introduce laymen into its open councils, and without in the least weakening the absolute power of Parliament, you loosen the bonds of discretion in which the clergy are held by their present unshared obligations, and you give them a fallacious countenance in any extravagance which they may be tempted to commit. Parliament is the only assembly of laymen which a national Church ought to have any relations with, and that it may have such relations with Parliament clearly and frankly clergy only must act for it. A minor consideration was once suggested by the Bishop of Derry, when he described his sensations at hearing the Athanasian Creed, put clause by clause, to the mixed Irish Church Assembly. To any ordinary reverent layman, the profanity of voting on such a creed would be even more repugnant than the pain of being expected to recite it.

On the whole, while by no means accepting

as true the statement of the canon that Convocation is the true Church of England by representation, I think it will be most prudent to consider it so, as soon as the whole of the clergy are proportionately represented in a united lower house, always assuming that the Church as thus embodied must submit itself to Parliament, and always anticipating that this necessity will have a highly prudential effect upon its determinations.

So far as the exclusion of laymen is concerned, the opinion I have ventured to submit coincides with the views of a school with which I have no sympathy, except so far as recognising it as an integral and inseparable part in the composition of our Church. It has been asserted by one bearing the honoured name of Blunt that Convocation is expressly designed "to merge the private judgment of the individual in the authority of his sacred order," and that in improving its position "what we want is the calm, deliberate, guiding tones of the priesthood to clear the air and show the bewildered flock the path of faith

and duty." One asks oneself on reading such words what amount of electoral and representative anomaly would suffice to shake so great a faith. Laymen cannot approach unto it. The language is such as they could not use to each other without a smile, and if any lay *attaché* of the High Church party utters it in their hearing, they consider him wanting in a certain masculine fibre which is indispensable for mutual respect. It does not follow that there is any lack of manliness in the clergy who make these claims; but what it may be very masculine for a Becket to demand it may be very effeminate for a Henry to concede.

There is probably a serious miscalculation underlying the great readiness of the High Church party for the democratic absolutism of a pure convocational government. Given a true and actively operating representation of the whole clerical body, it is not likely that the Lower House of Convocation would be so nearly identical with the full force of High Anglicanism as it now is. We should have more modesty of pretension in point of

authority, and less fatal triviality in the choice and treatment of subjects of debate. But even supposing an electorally reformed Convocation were of the same colour, and had the same rather childish propensities and susceptibilities at the present, what would it avail? Of what use is it to locate spiritual authority anywhere if when you have done so nobody is going to obey? Church authority to be real must be supported either by the civil arm or by preponderant public opinion. In the absence of these, and in the absence of an earnest faithfulness to the idea of comprehending as large a portion of the nation as possible, Church authority, whatever individuals may believe of its spiritual and eternal effect, is practically competent only to pronounce on what terms a certain corporation of religionists will admit members, and on what basis of order and discipline members shall be sought and retained.

If the Church were independent, and if these powers were left to the clergy—as they are voluntarily left by Roman Catholics in free

countries to the clergy of their Church—it would merely mean that a paying number of the laity had adopted this basis of Church order, which would not only be intelligible in theory and (with the addition of lay financial trustees and managers) tenable in practice, but would preserve the historical continuity of the Church, and with it the immemorial corporate union of our Church parties in one communion. We might even hope that such a constitution and policy adopted partially and tentatively in a remodelled constitution might so enlarge the borders of the Church as to render the Establishment as permanent as any human institution. And to this end the banishment of professional pedantry, sectional feeling, and priestly puerility from the discussions of Convocation would contribute more than any mere change of composition. But, on the other hand, nothing would bring these improvements sooner than an honest and real representation of all the clergy. A fairly constituted Convocation in which no party could display a monopoly of zeal and influence would represent

Anglicanism with just as much sacerdotalism wrung out of it as must be got rid of to retain the hearty adhesion of the English people.

The best course for Convocation to adopt, then, is to retain for itself representative reform, without the fatal addition of legislative prerogative; and then to speak and act for the Church in its denominational aspect and functions with the most anxious regard for those other aspects and functions which are national and comprehensive. This will require great wisdom, an abnegation of passion, much compromise in detail, and such organisation as will leave no doubt of the utterance of Convocation being that of a living voluntary communion, conscious of, and willing to perform, national duties.

Some observation of the moods and tenses of our countrymen has led me to the conviction that they value deeply many things which they seldom praise, and appreciate blessings of which they possess no logical apprehension. It is remarkable as an illustration of this how greatly the bishops have risen

in the estimation of the laity during a period in which I fear they have distinctly fallen in the opinion of the Lower House of Convocation. This is because in the quickening glow of public feeling the undefined but noble opportunities of the episcopacy have developed a true wisdom and public courage, which repudiates narrow professional canons and fancies, and aims at the best spiritual and ecclesiastical objects by the directest methods. So also the Church of England is most valued upon instinct by the people for reasons which are heard little of in the internecine brawls of infuriated factions. If we would preserve and strengthen those reasons, our endeavour must be so to manage and govern the Church that under all circumstances it may attract the same orders of minds as it has hitherto drawn to itself, and do the same sort and amount of work as heretofore for those who are not religiously attracted at all. The essence of this multiform power may not be easy to define, but it will be easy to perpetuate. A free Convocation really representing

the whole clerical body, unhampered by legislative duties, stimulated by contact with every form of religious life, and sobered by clear but purely moral responsibility to the whole lay community—that is, to the nation at large—will preserve the vitality of our venerable Church in its ancient historical mould, and enable it to run safely, freely, and with perfected symmetry into the grooves and complexities of inevitable change.

Miscellaneous

CHAPTER XIV

The Gift of Prayer

CHAPTER XIV

THE GIFT OF PRAYER

A FINE critical essay might be written on the Gift of Prayer. This must have been suggested to some by the high and beautiful character of the prayers composed by Mr. Lund, of the Liverpool "Blind Church," for a special Pulpit and Font Dedication Service. Carefully followed, they constituted a devout and complete manual for the Christian life, and their purpose was aided, at all events for such persons as attend that church, by their almost faultless diction, and by their entire avoidance of everything in composition which jarred on good taste or derogated from the sincere dignity of worthily conceived prayer. But here we shall lose the company of many to whom literary excellence

or immaculate English gives an idea of formality. To such persons prayer seems to require to be spontaneous, unrevised; just as it comes from the heart. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, Uttered or unexpressed; The motion of a hidden fire, That trembles in the breast. Prayer is the burden of a sigh; The falling of a tear; The upward glancing of an eye, When none but God it near." Some who feel these words—and all ought to feel them—may be apt to think that form and expression are of little consequence. But James Montgomery's hymn ends with the petition—of all prayers the surest to be right —"Lord, teach us how to pray"; and when the devotion is public and to be shared in by many, this prayer needs greatly to be answered, and to be answered in different ways for different people, so that the spirit of prayer may be kindled, and that the manner of prayer may not repel. It takes us back to other times, other manners, to recall that this most spiritual hymn was written at Edward Bickersteth's request in 1818, to put in his

"Treatise on Prayer," and that with two others it was printed on a broad-sheet for the use of the Sunday School children of Sheffield, where the poet lived. But this by the way.

Can prayers repel? Indeed they can, and do. Not, indeed, by their purport, except by unintelligibility to certain hearers. But by their style, their manner; even by their being repeated they repel often and greatly, and in many cases insuperably. The Prayer-Book is the greatest case of very general adaptability and acceptableness and popularity. Its English is so perfect, so nearly as homely as the themes permit—the expression is so natural, so beautiful, so truly from the heart—and the book is so tenderly associated with the life and growth of the majority of English people, that a great number in each generation delight in it whenever in the least degree religiously minded. Still, it is an undoubted fact that an inability to "stand the prayers" Sunday after Sunday has more actually to do with Dissent than many causes to which Dissent is frequently attributed. Arguments

and high principles are largely disregarded, but every man and woman knows whether he or she "likes the prayers." Nor is it a mere matter of what they are pleased to call monotony. (Fancy the prayers being called monotonous, when there is scarcely a line of them that does not shine each Sunday in a right mind with new brightness and glory.) Still stranger to say, the very perfection of the language repels or keeps at a distance a large section of the community—

> "Who their ill-tasted home-brewed prayer
> To the State's mellow forms prefer."

Such are facts, and it is another fact that for the indifference of many English Christians to what the best judges call merit in prayers there are creditable reasons. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," and there are many who can surely perceive the fervency and gladly assume the righteousness of the man who effectively "leads them in prayer." On the other hand, the "gift of prayer" which such good persons

possess is a sore trial to those in whose sensibility the idea of reverence is associated with the requirement of fitting language in which to approach the Divine Being. Loose English, impertinent egotism, current every-day expressions, as if God were a familiar acquaintance by no means held in awe—these things are dreadful. Some years ago, an important occasion, attended by one of the greatest of English philanthropists, was "opened with prayer" by a popular but by no means classical parochial incumbent. No person of taste who heard him will ever forget how, first reciting one of the most beautiful collects in the Prayer-Book, he fluently, with not even a pause at the "Amen," rattled on, "O Lord, we are here to-day to, &c.," giving the Almighty an easily, not to say commonly, expressed account of the objects of the institution concerned.

The critical essay desiderated above on the Gift of Prayer is not one on the spiritual aptitude, for that is independent of criticism, and the ordinarily understood "gift of prayer"

is as deeply valued by some, even in its crudest and rudest examples, as it is ridiculed for its literary offences by others. The quality that might well be written on, if there were a pen graceful enough, perceptive enough, lucid enough for the task, is that perfection of style, chastened and yet opulent, in which prayers are written which satisfy alike the emotions of the spiritual man and the literary judgment of the lover of perfect language. True, there are many most habituated to prayer whose exactions as to fit English are insignificant and faint. The Church of England has made no special provision for persons of poor taste in prayers. Some think she would have retained or enfolded back many of her stray sheep if some opportunities for extempore prayer had been permitted within the pale of her worship. However this may be, she has reason to be proud of the beauty of her established devotions, and especially of their expression in the choicest natural language of the completest body of spiritual aspirations. And so it is delightful if in any special service,

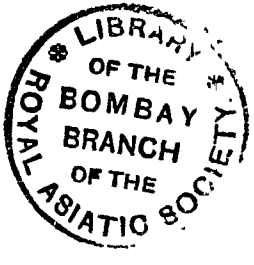
whether sanctioned or not sanctioned by authority, these same qualities are exhibited.

Take another example. Robert Louis Stevenson used to write prayers for his family worship at Samoa. Here is one of them: "We thank Thee, Lord, for the glory of the late days and the excellent face of Thy sun. We thank Thee for good news received. We thank Thee for the pleasures we have enjoyed, and for those we have been able to confer. And now, when the clouds gather and the rain impends over our forest and our house, permit us not to be cast down; let us not lose the savour of past mercies and past pleasures; but like the voice of a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memory survive in the hour of darkness. If there be in front of us any painful duty, strengthen us with the grace of courage; if any act of mercy, teach us tenderness and patience." Every one feels how beautiful this is, how much more impressive, and, to some temperaments, how much more stirring devotionally by reason of its literary fitness. If we are considering on the whole case what ought

to be done in ministering to prayer for so many differing worshippers, let it be our aim to recognise the good in all; to provide, as far as may be, without derogation, for the devotions of every type of mind; but to enjoy infinitely, in proportion to our gifts, prayers which are also, or which deserve to be, among the sacred classics of the world. No oblation is too humble, no heartfelt cry fails, to reach the ear and the compassion of the Highest; but it is worthy worship in those upon whom He has bestowed rare gifts of mind to offer for themselves, and to invite others to share in offering, petitions which in their chaste beauty of thought and speech are as the graven vials of gold, enriched with jewels and full of frankincense and myrrh, which the Wise Men of the East offered at Bethlehem in the first Christian adoration.

CHAPTER XV

The Pulpit Treatment of Public Questions



CHAPTER XV

THE PULPIT TREATMENT OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS

OUGHT preachers to discuss public questions in the pulpit? This is a rather burning question. Some would reply "No"; because in their judgment whatever preachers say about public questions is pretty sure to be wrong. Mr. Cobden used to say in private that he never had any hesitation in opposing a British war, because in no single instance of war had the country ever been right. Only a sweeping epigram of this sort suffices to express the feeling of aversion beforehand which many persons, and especially many Liberals, have as to clerical utterances on matters outside their proper religious business. Yet, on the other hand, it is urged by very sincere upholders of religious influence that religion ought to have a great and good effect alike in forming and

carrying out sound opinions on legislation and policy. To this the original objectors make several rejoinders.

First they repeat their allegation that there is not merely a fatality but a reason in the nature of things why deliverances from the pulpit either should be too colourless to have any effect at all, or should be worse than useless—either temporising and deferential, or wild and ineffectually devised. Preachers, such persons say, are between two poles. They are either obsequious to the *laisser faire* members of their congregations, or they go to extremes, either in unreasoning zeal or for self-advertisement. Of the one kind that clergyman is an illustration who, in preaching a Church of England Temperance Sermon, is mainly careful not to offend his brewers. Of the other sort that preacher is a sample who emulates the unmitigated nonsense of "In His Steps," or at least insists that total abstinence from alcohol is an absolutely obligatory rule of Christian life. A better demurrer to the demand that the pulpit should pronounce on

public affairs is that of necessity Christian preachers must be vague and general, and that if vague and general they may as well hold their tongues, or not even pretend to go beyond absolute generalities. Take, for instance, the tone of the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Westcott)[1] and that of the Dean of Ely (Dr. Stubbs) on questions Socialistic. One, at least, of these dignitaries holds strong views as to the effectual purport of Christian Socialism, and both are supremely anxious that not a thing should be done in a Christian community, either individually or collectively, to contravene the spirit of Christ. Eager and intent as they are, they yield nothing to persons who desire special guidance except affectionate counsels never to behave unworthily, and always to desire to do all the justice and all the good that can be done to others in all the labour dealings of life. This, though it includes everything in spirit, does not carry you far in matters teeming with

[1] "Delivered," of course, before the venerated bishop's lamented death.

difficulty as to what is the best conduct or course. Is this enough, though? Are admonitions unnecessary? Is it a matter of course that every man who goes to church on Sunday will be thoughtful to behave as a Christian should on Monday? And ought he not to be thus thoughtful? And if there is a fear that he will not be quite worthy of himself as a Christian, ought not the preacher to use the opportunity of the Sunday pulpit to enjoin him to rise to the height of the Christian character?

Let us suppose all these questions to be answered favourably to the practice of giving general Christian counsel—as they well may be, not only as to alcoholism and socialism, but as to peace and war, education, and many other ticklish topics: can we be said to have reached the limit of a sound licence in the utterances of the pulpit on public (not strictly religious) questions? A preacher is a citizen. He is in degree at least a read and cultured man. He may be an observant man. He meets many people. He hears many opinions.

He is often asked for his own opinion. He gives it in private under the responsibility of his religious and ministerial character. In doing so he does good. Why should he not do the same sort of good on a desirably larger scale from the pulpit? In answer to this question we offer a suggestion that has not to our knowledge been made before, but which seems important in more branches than one of preaching. It is this: Let preachers speak of whatever they think fit to speak of; only, except where they have an explicit and indisputable right of office to dogmatise, let them not be dogmatical. Let them suggest. Let them put the case. Let them speculate. Let them comment. Let them criticise with an air of view and contingency. Let it all have as far as is advisable the manner, the tolerance, of frank, intellectual experiment. When preachers alienate any section of their hearers by comments on passing events it is usually by the peremptoriness, the ecclesiastical autocracy, the "I am Sir Spiritual Oracle" tone of what they say.

Teetotaller and Epicurean, Imperialist and Little Englander, Socialist and Individualist, Pro-Boer and Pro-Beit, Sacerdotalist and Kensitite, Board School man and Voluntary School man, can all, unless they are intolerant, short-tempered fools, hear with patience and even pleasure honest outspoken preaching on current topics, if only the preacher candidly and good-humouredly shows that he recognises that there is another side, and that he is offering ideas, not laying down the law. And incalculable good may be done by suggesting points of view and things seen in this way—points of view which may not be the natural points of view of the hearers; things seen by one from whom such proffers of observation may be welcome, though pronouncements *ex cathedra* might be resented as impertinent. Nor is this suggestion to submit notions for thought rather than with dogmatic requirement altogether out of place even in the more ordinary domain of the pulpit. There is a fashion of spiritual preaching followed at the present time by some of our most striking

preachers which specially calls for this remonstrance. Such men as Dr. Forsyth, of Cambridge, Dr. Horton, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, Canon Gore (in a more Divinity way), and Mr. Hugh Price Hughes (in a more personal and harder way) are prolific in what may be called new positions or new facets of spiritual truth. If given forth as thoughts, imaginings, aspects, homiletic hypotheses, illustrations of the Truth's many-sidedness, these are not only interesting, but most welcome, and capable of much spiritual utility. Put forth as things of the first importance, which must be accepted definitely and dogmatically on pain of ostracism as "a heathen 'man and a publican," such ideas, often mere fancies, though fine fancies, are offensive to some of the best and most eager sermon hearers.

CHAPTER XVI

Church-going

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CHURCH-GOING

A VENERABLE publicist who took an active part in fixing the opinions on conduct of those whom he could influence advocated altruistic worship—namely, the practice of attending Divine service for the good of others. As this implies that obligation to worship is slack from the point of view of one's own personal duty and benefit, another implication is that the obligation to worship is imposed upon persons and for reasons not hitherto considered in this connection. Can it be said that apart from an orthodox impulse to worship there is any valid moral requirement of Church-going — any significance in it, any rules for it, any choice of the worship? A number of persons by position and others on account of certain non-

regulation opinions on theological matters may expect to be consulted or challenged on this subject. Some of us may feel it to be a duty to urge Church-going upon those who are negligent of it upon grounds not commonly taken. Others may feel bound in honesty to distinguish between their interpretation and use of Church-going from those that are more generally in vogue. A canon for Church-going is distinctly necessary.

The history of mankind shows that wherever the idea of a Supreme Being or even of gods exists the practice of assembling for worship is likely to prevail. All acts of worship are supposed to have originated in a desire to propitiate a divinity. In the course of progress this has been to an extent softened and humanised into a desire to please the Divinity. It is surely an anthropomorphic idea of God to suppose that He derives pleasure from ascriptions to Him of majesty and excellence, but it is natural that His creatures should expatiate statedly in praise, and especially in thanksgiving, for in every life there is reason

for gratitude; and, though we are rash to say anything about it, it is conceivable that the thanks of His creatures may be acceptable to the Creator, always assuming that in the mystery of Nature there is really some room for free-will. At all events it proves that so far the minds of men are in a proper and pious frame. We have now dropped a word which is full of significance in this domain. A man of piety in any sense—and happily the word has a great range of meanings—cherishes a thankful spirit. Further, he is willing to seek from the Higher Powers, or from a reverent recognition of the System of Things (or what Plato calls the Whole of Things) the best cultivation of his spiritual qualities. Further still, he shares with lower minds an instinctive impulse to petition for certain individual blessings; while in proportion to his true piety he will be spontaneously wishful to subordinate his personal desires to the exigencies, the laws and the well-working of the general scheme.

We have now nearly completed an explicit

statement of the rationale of public worship. Even if we were not to presume the existence of a personal God we might perceive that given an intellectual basis on which a non-theistic Church-going—such as the Positivists' —can be maintained, the observance of it must tend to individual and collective improvement. Presuming the existence of a personal God and of some sort of human free-will, we may perceive that public worship in the sense of our rationale may give a sublime pleasure to the Deity, while, and largely because, it must minister greatly to the perfecting of His devout creatures' character and lives. An intelligent persuasion will give to a hearty theistic worship the energy and afflatus of that loving communion with God for which in the opinion of most Christians, though not in the opinion of all, the most earnest sympathy with a "stream of tendency making for righteousness" is a starved and frigid substitute.

To complete our rationale of Church-going, for purposes of obligation as a matter of conduct, we have to descend to a somewhat

inferior level of thought. We have to consider expediency and experience.

1. It is a mistake to suppose that even the most pious man can dispense with definite public religious observances without some loss of spiritual stimulus. Men think they can worship quite as well on a hillside, and so on. As a matter of fact they do not. Hillside devotions are spasmodic, vague, unsustaining, uncorrecting, unintellectual, unpersevering.

2. For all but the highest natures there would be no devotion at all if there were not public devotion.

3. Many natures need that the mind should play periodically on the purest spiritual topics, and should be played upon by the most potent moral restraints in order to avoid actual sin; and the most potent moral restraint is an habitual contemplation of holy things.

4. On all natures, except the ribald, public offices of religion have a refining influence.

5. In the actual life of our country, many men, and especially many women, are literally without intellectual or high-minded or high-

souled exercises except at their places of worship.

We now come to Altruistic worship, and we unhesitatingly contend that both in the act of going to church and in the article of tolerating things in the services which are displeasing, a duty is laid upon us to countenance the public worship in which the worshippers of our country participate. We ought not to shut our eyes to the fact that through this agency average English people are touched to finer issues than by any other influence. And it would require either a very strong or a very dead imagination to conceive that these average English people would not be very much the worse for the loss of the Church-going habit. Hence a serious responsibility would be incurred by any person at all looked up to who should by example or speech underrate the value of that habit.

The truth, however, is that none of us, not even the most believing and devout, not even the most sceptical or agnostic, can abstain from public worship without sustaining spiritual loss.

Intelligent and thinking men have, indeed, other resources. They are not so absolutely dependent as the ordinary vulgar on the personal benefits of public worship. But no man of any belief is in as good state of mind and heart when he eschews religious services as he would be if he attended them. The case most nearly perfect of a thoroughly holy agnostic life—a life not merely sound but spiritual—is probably that of John Stuart Mill. But when Mill's private life came to be known, it was discovered that though he had not attended any ordinary ritual he had maintained usages of religious meditation which though to us odd in their special character were very real to him and by him were observed with a faithful tenacity very infrequent among those by whom worship is ignored.

One who has never departed from the habit of Church-going can scarcely judge what he would be without it; and the hereditary and educational effect of religious observance is in the highly educated class particularly strong even if the practice of religious observances

has been abandoned. These admissions afford some presumptive support to the doctrine that Church-going ought not to be lightly given up even having regard solely to the spiritual interests of a man who cannot for himself subscribe to the dogmas which Church services express.

If due weight is given to all that has now been said, an inference will be arrived at that considerable laxity should be encouraged in reference to the extent to which worshippers adhere to dogma. The exercise of this privilege is a duty upon those who are unable to concur in orthodox beliefs. Indeed, we cannot imagine the degree of unbelief which would exonerate a good and spiritually minded man from attending Divine service. Ritual, written and unwritten, devotional and homiletic, is supposed by the superficial to be the ceremonial formula of doctrines which have been delivered clear-cut to mankind by revelation. A more intelligent regard convinces one that ritual—in other words all that takes place in worship—is a resultant of all the spiritual forces which from

the earliest times have left their impress on the devout human mind. Let dogma be what it will, it can vindicate itself in worship only by its reverential, or purifying, or elevating subjective effect on the worshipper. Being what we are by heredity and education we may need the exhibition of dogma in some sort to make sure of the effect of the underlying doctrine; but, so to speak, the exhibition of the dogma need not be dogmatic. It will serve many quite well as a parabolic embodiment, or even as an artistic illustration. And those who absolutely reject its dogmatic truth may fully realise its spiritual power even over themselves. It is thus that Positivists are among those who most devoutly use "the Imitation of Christ."

The popular opinion, supported unhappily by a good deal of earnest and reasoned conviction, is something to this effect: that if in the service that one is in the habit of attending there is anything that goes seriously against one's grain, one ought to seek out another church or chapel; and that if eventually we find no place of worship corresponds in its

services with our belief it is better that we should give up Church-going altogether. The minor operation of this doctrine is fidgety, fussy, and small, tends to distract the mind from higher spiritual interests, deprives whoever follows it of the benefit that may come to him from variety of religious impressions, and foregoes the tonic and bracing and liberalising effect which even incongruity of sentiment or belief may produce upon a susceptibility which has been organised to a higher degree of spiritual refinement.[1]

We have now arrived at the point at which it may humbly be submitted that any of us are entitled to advise any reverent person *en rapport* in any degree with the solemnising and spiritual effect of life and the universe not

[1] It has been said on good authority that eminent Presbyterian divines, when they are not in charge of any congregation, and even if in high professorial office, are prone to make a practice of not attending Divine worship. On a distinguished Presbyter being asked to explain this, he said he believed it was that these men, being of high culture and special feeling, were unable to sympathise with a great deal that occurred in the public services, and therefore avoided them.

to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," and further to advise any such person to avoid excessive scrupulosity as to the nature of Church services. It may be desirable to use any influence we have in the encouragement of a rational and discouragement of a superstitious tone of worship. But we should be on our guard against sailing away from other worshippers, for public worship would be comparatively useless if it became an affair only for the *élite*. Moreover, it never can; so that worshippers of the higher intellectual types had far better take it pretty much as it is, and read into it their own feelings and beliefs.

Some will be anxious to discover the precise point at which toleration and conformity should cease. We are not so anxious. The only thing we should seriously deprecate in worship would be either something which in itself or in its manner of ritual use lowered rather than raised the spiritual frame and state of the worshipper. But on this head it is difficult to

know anything with certainty except about our individual selves.

May not a reasonable and devout man put his personal position thus? If a dogma or dogmatic assertion in a religious service ministers to the recognition and assimilation of a spiritual grace or truth, let me have such benefit as I can obtain in that way by my mind and heart playing upon it. If either by my own fault or by that of the supernatural dogma I can obtain no such benefit, then let me recognise and assimilate the spiritual grace or truth direct, independently of this offered vehicle. In either case I am better at Church than away; ignoring the necessity of the soul for periodical occupation with spiritual things; ignoring the fact that this occupation of the mind is especially helpful if aided by the magnetism of concourse and community; ignoring also that fellow-citizens possibly of less knowledge and innate spirituality may need my presence to help to keep them in the right way.

CHAPTER XVII

The Decay of "Experimental Religion"

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THE DECAY OF "EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION."

[THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS "SERMON" APPEARED AS A LETTER IN THE *TIMES* ON NOVEMBER 9, 1898]

NEITHER scientific nor philosophical considerations are, for the time, affecting the course of religious practice or opinion. Anything like experimental religion, as it used to be understood, is equally out of fashion in the Anglican communion.

The Low Church is dead. The Broad Church is buried. A larger proportion of Anglicans than for many centuries past believe that an important miracle took place at their baptism when they were incapable of conscious spiritual sensation; that a miracle takes place every time the elements are consecrated in the Lord's Supper; that for anything they know

this miracle may be partly physical; that although they cannot, and would rather not, say what the miracle is—and for legal reasons are quite clear that it is not transubstantiation —their vague sense of it has something to do with their reverence for the rite, and with their proper reception of Communion; that the miracle partly depends on the due and regular episcopal ordination of the priest who consecrates; that their spiritual health largely depends on the sacrament thus understood and secured—much more largely than on the spiritual cultivation of their minds and hearts by original meditation and prayer; and many—as earnest and devout letters in the *Times* have shown—have advanced so far in the sacerdotal direction that this is their mood: instead of that definite parting from sin which was the idea of the old Evangelicals, and instead of keeping up their religiousness by Bible reading and other sustaining spiritual exercises, they cannot feel sure of themselves without frequent confession and absolution. They speak on this subject as if their religious ideal was inter-

mittent sin and sufficiently frequent sacerdotal clean-slating; and they speak thus in the most sincerely pious manner, without any perception either of the lowness of spiritual tone in this mood, or of its liability to be regarded with grim amusement by all who have a sense of humour.

No such change has occurred in Scotland—though very important changes have taken place there. No such change has occurred among Irish Protestants, who, so far as I know, have not changed at all. But, whereas in 1830 there was no material difference between the religion of England, Scotland, and the Protestants of Ireland, the religion of Anglicans at the end of the century is essentially different in experimental essence and in spiritual method, and therefore I am almost inclined to say in essence, from orthodox Nonconformist, Presbyterian, and Irish Church religion.

Even opponents of sacerdotalism give no consideration to the place which the Evangelicism of Scott the Commentator, of Romaine, of John Newton, of Daniel Wilson, of Simeon,

and, coming later, of Baptist Noel, the Sumners, Dallas, Goodhart, and Montagu Villiers, took, as they thought for ever, in the structure of the Church's spiritual operation.

Admiration of the zeal of the Ritualists among the poor is the greatest protection that they enjoy. But let us realise that according to the diction and meaning of religious matters from the time of Law and Wesley and Wilberforce down to the Puseyite triumph—and even now according to the locutions of English experimental religion as it is understood among the populace in England, America, and the colonies—nothing effectual is done by these zealous, charitable, stimulating, and inspiring clergy, by all their efforts and all their rites, for the salvation of their people's souls. The processes are different from those that used to be deemed vitally essential. That realises to us the great change in religion at its very base, so far as the individual is concerned, that has taken place under the influence of the Church revival.

Either experimental, as distinguished from

sacramental, religion will, under the influence of the Primate's charge, be abandoned by the minority who still cherish it, or these Anglicans will be disposed to become Nonconformists, as will other Churchmen, from hostility to anything Roman. Many will feel half-inclined to turn Dissenters who will not do it. To be a Dissenter—let us face the operative fact—is such a come-down! But there are many Church people to whom it is not a come-down, or who will not think it is. Others who hate sacerdotal doctrine just as much, and who are superior to the desire to stay in the Church for mere social *status*, will yet see good reason to remain in the national Establishment; but they will be apathetic and somewhat contemptuous members.

I was once breakfasting with Mr. Gladstone, and I had the daring to express to him my wonder at his taking so deep an interest in the Greek Church, he being a man of so much really spiritual feeling, and the members of the Greek Church being, so far as I could understand, persons in whom there was nothing that

deserved to be called spiritual feeling at all. Mr. Gladstone's reply surprised me. Others were present, and the subject could not be pursued far; but he said: Did I really think that that mattered so much? Was not the material thing the possession of the dogmas and the fixity of faith upon them? This—though I well know how far it was from the practice of Mr. Gladstone's own soul—almost exactly expresses what I take to be the tone into which a vast proportion of English religion has passed.

Fifty years ago a religious man used to mean a man living in constant concern, introspection, and self-examination on points and shades of his own spiritual condition and experience. This described the average religious man. The higher type of the religious man was the man calm, serene, and enjoying in his religion; and many of us, if we cast our minds back, are able to remember men, especially among the Evangelical clergy—such, for instance, as Canon Carus—in whom this type was, I may almost say,

celestially exemplified. It is now possible to be a religious man at far less expenditure of mind, with much less—and perhaps no—spiritual experience, and in a comparatively coarse sphere of mental exercise. The religious person now in the Church of England is usually a person whose experiences of feeling both in thoughts at odd times and at services are entirely elementary; who considers that he or she may legitimately be quite happy if concrete sin has not been committed, or has been confessed and clean-slated, and rites have been observed; and whose active religious thought at its best is a mere polemical interest in highly esteeming everything sacerdotal and despising every other form of religious occupation or observation.

CHAPTER XVIII

Highmindedness

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HIGHMINDEDNESS

HIGHMINDEDNESS is a quality little aimed at, though much admired. Even many who most admire it do not aim at it much. Why? Perhaps it is thought to be unattainable by the most persevering. Perhaps men think highmindedness ought to come naturally, or will not come at all. Perhaps because it is felt to be too good and great for unaffected human nature. Perhaps because most people feel that to be very highminded on purpose would be "putting on side." Surely highmindedness ought to be tried after. In a way it is. As the days go by, and as observation and gossip pass in review all sorts of conjunctures, great and small, even average people make a sort of point of not taking a low view; or if they do they insinuate a salvo,

such as "I'm afraid that's not a high view to take, but——" Now, the view is either right or wrong. Highmindedness which is out of sight like an invisible kite need not be considered either for guidance or for use. If the view is low, it ought not to be taken; but it is not low because it is practically obligatory. The willingness to condescend to what is consciously recognised as low, because such condescension appears inevitable, is a trap to the conscience, and depraves it, and all the time is often superfluous. For if a concession is justified, to make it is not less highminded than to decline to make such a concession. Let highmindedness be maintained as an indispensable and obligatory ideal, even when what seems not so highminded has to be done in deference to prudence. The result will be that the proof of the innocence and the wisdom of what seems necessary will be required to be stronger than if the obligatory ideal were not considered. And even if a too self-indulgent error is sometimes made, it is more likely to be an exception, and the general standard is

less likely to be lowered, than if the step taken had been admittedly low.

A general abasing of the standard of conduct in this aspect is what has most to be dreaded. Let no man ever say, "I know I am taking a low view," but if what seems a low view has justifiably to be taken, let the person who takes it say, "This may seem a low view, but it is justified by such and such considerations." A sort of declension from highminded right which is held to be most frequent and most subtly tempting is that which John Stuart Mill attributed to the fact that few women are conversant with public duty or arguments about it. That philosopher alleged that wives, mothers, and sisters unhesitatingly advised their husbands, sons, and brothers—not, of course, in reference to actual criminality, but in reference to choice of conduct in matters not of patent obligation—to disregard conscience and to put their principles in their pockets whenever it was necessary for their interest. The nicest women did this, he said, unblushingly and

without feeling that it was wrong, although almost any right-minded man must think it mean to follow their advice. This difference of view certainly could not be due to a slighter sense of general morality on the part of female relations. The explanation is that the women were led by their strong affection to disregard ideal rules of duty which had never been deliberately placed within their ken. John Stuart Mill's inference was that it was essential for the good and for the morals of Society that men and women should cultivate the same ideals of duty, consider the same affairs, and keep themselves in touch with the same rules of conduct; and this in a recognised way in matters not generally held to be within woman's sphere. If beyond her sphere she gave her men relations advice, harm must come if through unfamiliarity with high doctrines of behaviour she recommended courses of action on grounds of mere self-interest.

Here we are on ground of considerable difficulty. Let us leave on one side altogether the question whether women are thus and act

thus, because that is not essential to our point of view. Enough that it is possible to act thus; and with many usual to act thus; and according to some foolish to act in any other way. This is the fact that the individual man or woman has to face, and if he or she faces it rightly, the face will be set as a flint against all essentially low motives. We say essentially low because we fully admit that at points in chains of events the dictates of prudence are as high and as authoritative as any of higher-seeming moral pretensions. The need is to settle conscientiously that such prudential motives are in each case so unquestionable as to be morally binding. No general rule can be laid down. Nations have to settle in their consciences whether certain conjunctures morally require or justify certain courses. Individuals have to settle in their consciences, first, whether the seemingly-lower motive is as clearly imposed upon them as in certain cases it is on a nation; and, secondly, whether an individual is as much entitled or obliged to act upon such motives as a nation is.

Often the decision must be difficult; but it should always be made; and always high-mindedly.

Nor is highmindedness to be cherished only in conduct. It needs to be observed quite as sedulously in the expression of opinion and feeling alike in private and in public. There is no person who contributes more to degrade insensibly the general tone than he who either from innate lowness of mind or from cynical affectation habitually talks without highminded-ness. And in public speaking descents from highmindedness—to which there is great temptation and to which many effective speakers are prone—are most depraving to the public mind. We avoid specific illustrations because if we chose any sufficiently forcible our guiding motive in selecting them would be misinterpreted. But it is a literal fact that one may take two long speeches delivered in the same week by two different statesmen, and if, pencil in hand, one were to put a cross upon every sentence which is not highminded, one of those speeches would remain unmarked and the other would be figured over with at least several crosses.

CHAPTER XIX

Popular Intellectual Cultivation in English Communions

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POPULAR INTELLECTUAL CULTIVATION IN ENGLISH COMMUNIONS

THIS subject avows itself as of lesser importance and dignity. It is dominated by that inferior word "popular." It has mainly to do with the religious facilities of persons who are not highly cultivated. It belongs, some may think, to the Philistine region of actual religious machinery.

How I came to think of the subject was that I had to open a Baptist Bazaar. When one has to say something one must find something to say. On my morning walk I evolved what was subsequently thus reported :—

"Sir Edward Russell said it was interesting to note how much in these days was covered by the organisation of a church. Whatever might have been thought at one time

when, for instance, Edward Miall was deemed dangerously heterodox for proposing to associate with their chapels a number of agencies for general culture, experience showed that there was no harm, but rather good, in the addition and accretion upon churches of, as it were, collateral means of usefulness, and of moral, spiritual, and intellectual improvement. The religious people of the country might be divided into three classes—quietists, revivalists, and intellectualists. They crossed and interlaced, and men and women were found in one class with the qualities of another, but still the distinction generally held. Among the ranks of the quietists he would place the two Churches of Rome and England; the revivalists were scattered abroad amongst all denominations, comprising those who, in a spirit of early Methodism, were for refreshing the spiritual condition of things; and the intellectualists were mainly composed of Unitarians, Congregationalists, and a certain large proportion of Baptists. Of course, the learning of the Church of England was incomparable, and it had always had great preachers; but the laity and a large number of the clergy did not aim at a high standard of intellectual exercise in connection with religious observances. To the Dissenters had come the great pride and glory of popularly cultivating the intellect as a means of spiritual stimulus, of blending the intellect with the soul, and the mind with the heart, in the prosecution of religious objects and religious life. That was what had been accomplished so much in the modern form of the Nonconformist Church, where, associated with its highest spiritual endeavours, there were abundant opportunities of pursuing in every direction intellectual progress and cultivation."

It were a gross and puerile insult to place the great and learned and deeply-thinking Church of England below any other English communion in the cultivation and exercise of the intellect. I am a very stout Churchman. Not being of the fashion of the day—being in fact an ultra-latitudinarian—I find myself as much severed from the sympathy of others as I am universal in my sympathy with them. If I named my masters I should speak of Hooker and Tillotson, but I know that times have changed and positions are advanced, and that I am only entitled humbly to guess what Tillotson would have thought in these days. Unfortunately, the tendency now is to separate crystallisation ; mutual exclusion ; sectarianism, and consequent denationalisation of religion. For the moment the Church of England is very safe as an Establishment, and greatly growing as a Church ; but she is socially assimilating individuals rather than wisely comprehending varieties. Her vigour is too much of one pattern. That pattern is too little, though it seems a contradiction to say so, of the present

day. Depend upon it, while there is a great deal of complaisant conformity, especially among the educated classes, conformity is largely mechanical, languid, and almost mindless. Where earnest, it is prone to be either clerical, which, in laymen, if I can be understood without offence, has a quality of deficient manliness; or mediæval, which ought to be left far behind, except by the "historic sense"; or almost purely philanthropic and ameliorative, which, though good, is not a complete spiritual cultivation. If we avoid Disestablishment—as I should prefer, except in Wales, unless the English Dissenters' sense of pecuniary and social grievance should become acute—it will, I fear, be at a cost of the deadening of the actual interest of intelligent people in religion. If Disestablishment come, unless policy make the Disestablished Church much more comprehensive than any now largely prevailing sentiment would require, the nation will be cut up into a number of foolishly insistent and probably bigoted sects, neither having nor making history deserving of the name.

How should the Church act in the meantime? When I say the Church I use the word not in the ridiculous artificial sense in which too many clergymen say in their pulpits, "Our Church has wisely done this or that"—or "wisely ordered this or that." All persons with any history know that there never was a Church body corporate in England with any power of doing or saying anything. Whatever passes for Church Rubric or Church action is the happy or unhappy accident of national evolution, which has long ceased to be formal and legislative. When it was so it was under the veto of the State. It is now either inchoate usage or formalised by State judicial machinery.

However, when I ask what the Church ought to do in the immediate future, I mean, first, what ought to be done by any existing functionaries, such as the archbishops, bishops, and others who can influence events, in order by corporate action, even if not immediately regularised, to avert Disestablishment, or to prepare for it by increased efficiency. For

curiously enough, increased efficiency, besides being intrinsically desirable, will serve equally either to prevent Disestablishment or to make it innocuous. Secondly, I ask what ought to be done by those individuals who for practical purposes constitute the Church and exercise volition in its name: the incumbents—the beneficed Corporations sole who hold the livings and manage the services and the Church work—and the curates, who act more or less under their direction.

That admirable prelate and great Churchman, Dr. Thirlwall, writing in 1874 to the Primate of the day, said: "I most heartily pray that you may be very long spared to watch over and defend the Church in this critical period of her history from her foes, and, when needed, *from her friends.*"

There are some friends of the Church who are indisposed to take any notice of Dissenters; would scorn to learn of them, and wince at any acknowledgment of their good points. But against such friends the Church needs defending. There must be that in the

practices of Nonconformity which appeals to something in many Englishmen, or Dissent would not have subsisted for three hundred years and more against every social interest and consideration. Moreover, it either has or it has not enlisted in religion a great deal of distinctly intellectual interest among persons not over-well equipped for intellectual exercise; while the Church may or may not have left fallow and torpid intellectually a vast proportion of those who attend its services. Whether these things are so or not is a fair subject of inquiry. If they are so it is a fair subject of public admonition. I thought so when I made my speech at the Baptist Bazaar. I was not running down my own Church. I was not fulsomely complimenting my Nonconformist audience. It occurred to me that the occasion was a fit one for saying what I thought had better be said somewhere.

The word Quietist was not used by me in its technical theological sense. The Quietism I mean is that expressed in the key of the "Christian Year"—a mood of religion only

enjoyed occasionally either by "Revivalists" or by "Intellectualists."

Ambiguity and interlacing enmesh the classification on which I have ventured, and there is an especial liability to confusion in the word "Intellectualists" as here applied. Properly it would apply to preaching, and I partly so mean it; but for the other moiety of the matter I "dominate it by the inferior word popularly," and honour with a place among the Intellectualists those humbler persons who in their measure and on their level are promoting intellectual interest by Literary Societies and other agencies in connection with places of worship.

As to preaching, Archbishop Magee wrote as follows in support of the contention that Church of England clergymen ought to try to preach better, and if they did would succeed: "That a man must be born with some special gift in order to obtain it is an entire mistake. Depend upon it the power is within reach of nine out of ten of the clergy. This is obvious because the ministers of all other Churches do

possess it. So also do most members of Parliament after a fashion." The Bar affords another instance. Its members are of the same class of men as the clergy and similarly educated, and not one of them, except those engaged in Chamber practice, could earn a living if they remained as ineffective in speech as many of our clergy are content to be to the end of their days.

It should be remembered too that the audiences at church are better educated in the main than audiences at chapel, and that in the week a large proportion of them converse with their parson, as it were, on terms of intellectual equality. There is a sense in which it may be said that the average Churchman in hearing a sermon goes down to his religion, while an average Dissenter in hearing a sermon goes up to his religion. A clergyman desirous of improving his people on their spiritual side through their intellect, should be encouraged, not daunted, by the scope given to him by the superior cultivation of his people. The liturgy, indeed, always gives intense delight to all

reverent persons, who are not of the type to find good things go tasteless by repetition, and it is often said by Church people that Dissenters make too much of the sermon. I agree that many of them make too little of the prayers, by the vulgarity and familiarity of their extempore petitions. But there have always been sermons ever since the Sermon on the Mount and long before. The Roman Church has a fine ritual, with which many of its "Quietists" are satisfied, but Roman Catholic preachers are as a rule efficient and effective. A good sermon is still in a manner wished for at Church. The most average ordinary Churchmen are delighted when they hear one. And Churchmen of a non-ordinary type are not less impressible, not less amenable to pulpit attraction. Mansfield Chapel at Oxford is said to be often thronged on Sunday by Church of England undergraduates and dons eager to hear Dr. Fairbairn. I think it only fair to say that Church of England preaching often seems worse than it is owing to bad manner. I was in Edinburgh one

Sunday some time ago and heard four sermons. Curiously enough the most impressive of these was read—but read as if the young divine were evolving a prophecy. He was a Free Churchman. Two others were by preachers of the Old Kirk. Both were in different ways very effective. The fourth was at the Episcopal Cathedral, and in the English parsonic manner. I carefully watched the discourse, and am convinced that this last sermon would have held its own with the others if it had been delivered as well.

The pregnant demand of Dr. Arnold for books not actually religious but written on common subjects in a Christian spirit—the consequent vast extension of the scope of the Religious Tract Society and the Christian Knowledge Society—the stimulus so given to other publishers—the liberal principles in the main of the Young Men's Christian Associations—the establishment of Literary and other educative Societies in connection with Churches and Chapels—have brought under the conduct of religion a great deal of the popular cultiva-

tion of the time. "The Christianity of the present day," said Mr. Miall in 1849, "is too much a separate department of human duty—a distinct engagement occupying itself chiefly with direct religious exercises, public, domestic, and private. What is wanted, and what, if our sympathies are in union with God in the Gospel, will be forthcoming, is a governing character to impress itself upon all that we do in all our relationships—a living and assimilating influence to penetrate and pervade all our activities. To be at one with God—the great object to secure which His Son was given to, and came amongst, men—is to agree with Him as to all that He has revealed touching the essential principles of rightness upon which His moral government is based. And as a taste for beauty when once elicited and formed can never become dormant, let the subject of it be where he will, so sympathy with rightness, whether it have immediate respect to God or to His creatures, can never be suspended in any of the varied scenes of human life."

This was a new gospel then. It is now the

received practice of every religious community—so far as it has not been lately destroyed by pastimes. Any one who is often called upon to take a part either ceremonial or other in the extra-spiritual doings of our religious bodies knows that he has continually to recognise as a fact, and to accept as, at all events, a useful bridge to something better, a very general cultivation of human powers in connection with these purely spiritual agencies. At a very dour Presbyterian Church in 1893–4 the programme of the Church work included Philomathic, Philotechnic, Philanthropic departments, supplementing the old Bible classes and the Literary Society with even such adjuncts as sick-cooking, nursing, first aid, carpentry, photography, lodging-house visitation, flower culture, with a large &c., &c., all "circling round the sanctuary, presenting a unique syllabus of work demanding a constant expenditure of time and energy."

I do not consider the monopolisation of so many various interests by religious bodies is an ideal state of things, but it is good Christian

work and no intrusion, so long as more exactly appropriate machinery is not active.

And we all know that there is nothing new in the spiritualty, when animated by a large and kindly spirit, taking a considerable and salutary part in general affairs. There is a pretty passage in a late work of Ian Maclaren, in which great honour is done to the miscellaneous benevolent interpositions of old Scottish pastors in the business and interests of their parishioners. In the middle ages, as Dr. Rendall has pointed out, a large town would have been as inconvenient without a cathedral as without a market-place. "The religious and social life of the day were closely united." Dante delivered lectures in Florence Cathedral. The cathedral was the established place of public meeting. It was "church, theatre, concert-room, lecture-hall, museum, and parade. It fed the intellectual, the artistic, the histrionic, no less than the religious sense."

Mutatis mutandis this anticipated the ideal of Mr. Miall as to his chapel.

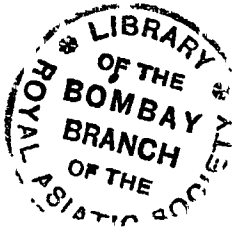
We all, I trust, prefer the greater sacredness which now attaches in England (though not altogether, curiously enough, in Scotland) to buildings devoted to religious uses. But there is no reason for discouraging the good that is done intellectually and philanthropically by churches and chapels in their subsidiary buildings and otherwise in the secular domain. A too great insistence, indeed, on the essential secularity of anything rather tends to the profane. The busy and much-amusing-themselves youth of the country are much indebted to religious organisations which draw them to serious thought about serious things, or even to the enjoyment of pleasant graceful things under sacred auspices.

Before closing I cannot help saying that there is much to be desired of preachers of all denominations in the way of equalising the information and the tone of the preacher with those of his most intelligent hearers on subjects of high interest. A great deal of preaching is in a separate groove and dialect which almost deserve the name of cant. An intelligent

clergyman lays it aside and talks quite differently the moment you meet him outside, and many good things quite religious are in the pulpit of all denominations totally ignored. Church history, for instance, is never resorted to or even mentioned. Except for the perpetual "Our Church tells us," which is usually a futile figure of speech, one might suppose the Church had no yesterday. At a good dinner-table a man is supposed to know a little at least of the distinctive characteristics and work of Augustine, of Clement, of Origen, of Athanasius, of Anselm, of Luther, of Calvin, of Law, of Wesley, of John Newton, of Pusey, of Newman, of Maurice. And upon a string of such names may be hung the whole chaplet of historic Christian ideas. But as a rule who ever hears of such men from the pulpit, except in the most casual way? An unctuous morsel may be cited from Augustine, or a worn-out story may be told of him for the thousandth time; but the single novel of "Hypatia" has told more of the great Father (and that needs expansion and correction enough) than all the

English pulpits of this century. A *bonalité* of Luther is given now and then, but who tells as D'Aubigné told, or from any other point of view, the story of his struggle into life eternal by the way of Justification by Faith? If preachers were to instruct their hearers in such matters, even up to the level supposed to be attained by ordinary educated Society, not only would the popular apprehension of the great grasp and wide spiritual area of our religion be clearer and better balanced, but the intellectual interest and consequently the emotions of our Church-going masses would be deeply stirred.

THE END



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